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JOHN FOGERTY, DOUG CLIFFORD AND STU COOK ON BEING BIGGER THAN THE BEATLES



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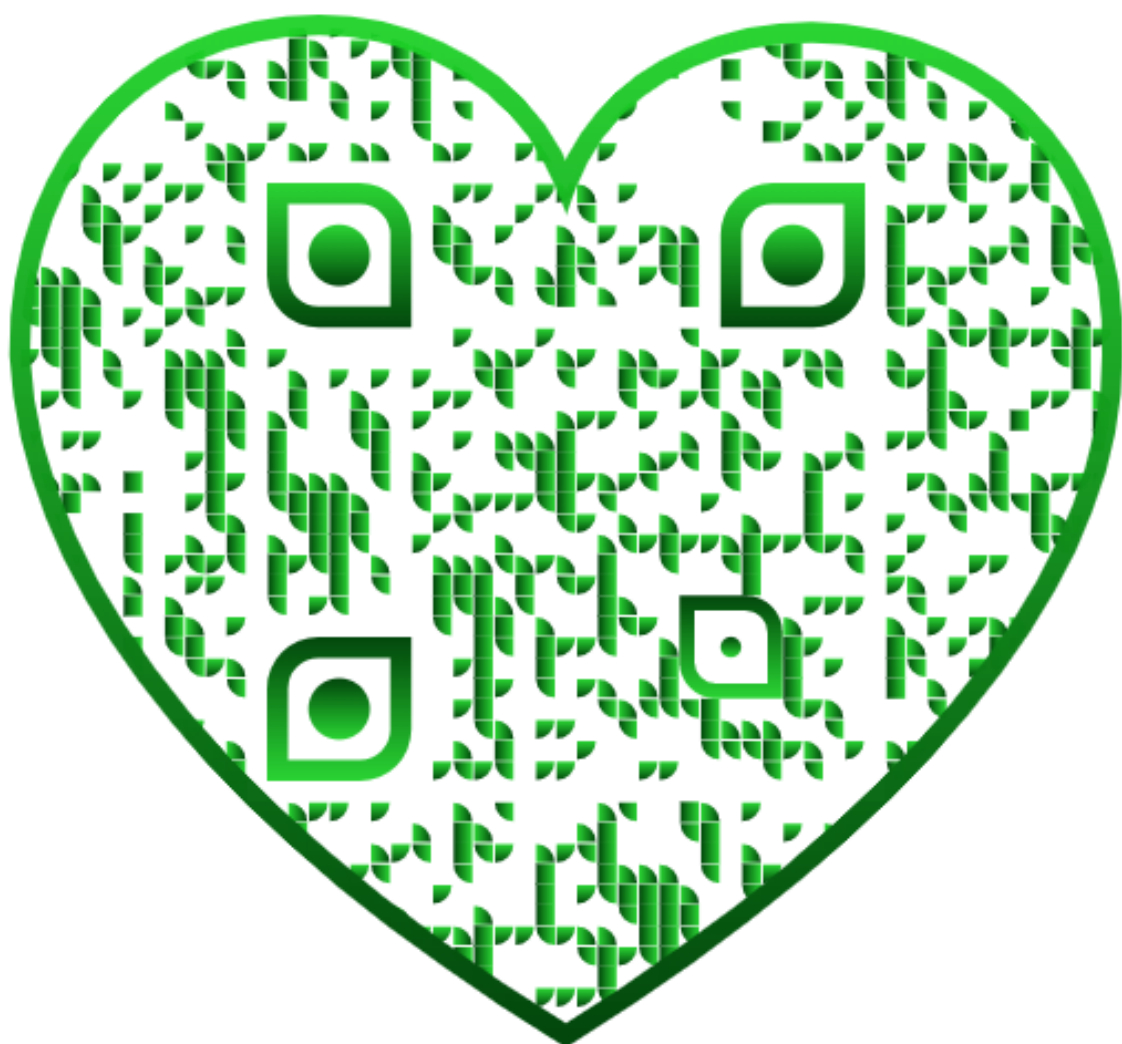
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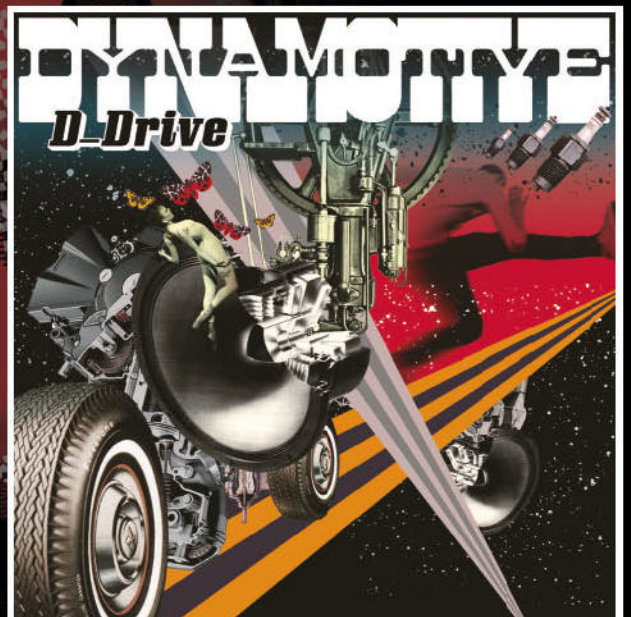


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Jimi Hendrix

"Great guitar playing needs a vehicle for it to do that. Jimi has great songs, period."

PHOTO FROM JIMI BY JANIE HEURDY AND JOHN MC DEMOTT, PUBLISHED BY CHRONICLE CHROMA, RICHARD PETERS / © AUTHENTIC HENDRIX, LLC

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LOWY HUGHES ALDRICH TICHY

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Had the world not lost him at the ridiculously young age of 27 in 1970, Jimi Hendrix would have celebrated his 80th birthday this month. I don't think there's a rock guitarist... scratch that... a rock *musician* alive who doesn't owe some sort of debt to Jimi. Whether in terms of sonics, playing skills or showmanship, we really haven't seen another of his like. This month, ahead of the release of a brand new book and a live album, we celebrate his songs and his influence, in the company of some of his star admirers, collaborators and contemporaries.

That's not all, though. This issue we also reunite – on paper, at least! – the surviving members of Creedence Clearwater Revival to discuss their glory days and being bigger than The Beatles; we chat to Nickelback's Chad Kroeger about their return; Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons and more regale us with tales of Kiss's 1980s; we hang out with Bush, Marcus King... and there's so much more.

Until next month...

Siân Llewellyn,
Editor



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BRUCE FLEMING/GETTY

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This month's contributors



LISA CZECH

Lisa photographed her first band when she was 17, and then made music photography her career. Her work has been featured internationally on tour buses, billboards and album covers and in magazines. The list of artists she's photographed includes Weezer, Third Eye Blind, Godsmack, Twenty One Pilots, and this month Marcus King for *CR* (p56). See more of her work at lisaczech.com and @lisa_czech



NIALL DOHERTY

Niall Doherty is a writer and editor whose first run-in with Bush came back when he rented the band's debut album *Sixteen Stone* from Chelmsford library in the mid-90s. His plaid shirt still fit him back then. He also co-runs the music Substack letter *The New Cue*. For this issue he interviewed Bush's Gavin Rossdale (p60) and The White Buffalo (p106).



KEN MCINTYRE

Ken is a frankly legendary rock'n'roll writer, TV and radio personality and all-round long-in-the-tooth-but-still-in-the-game raconteur. He spent the 2010s losing his hair and hosting a TV show called the *Heavy Leather Topless Dance Party* that lived up to its title, and now spends most of his time buying back his teenage heavy metal dirtbag record collection. For this issue he spoke to Marcus King (p56).



5150

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Siân Llewellyn
Now playing: Bush, *The Art Of Survival*

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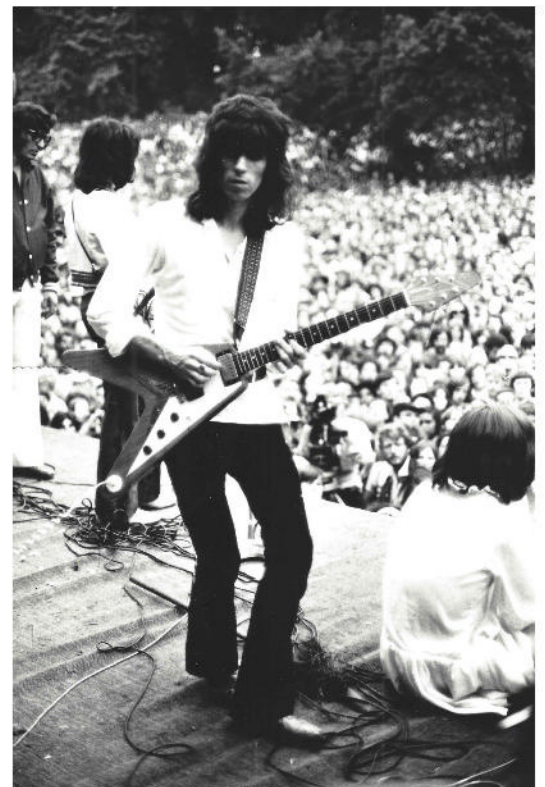
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'Lost' Stones Photos Found

Previously unseen Rolling Stones photos discovered in the home of former band 'minder'.



A COLLECTION of previously unseen photographs of the Rolling Stones taken by the band's associate 'Spanish' Tony Sanchez has been discovered in a loft by his grandson Matthew Dominguez. The collection is of photos from the Stones' heyday from the mid-60s until the late 70s, up to when Sanchez left the band's employment following the publication of his infamous book *Up And Down With The Rolling Stones*.

"The photos are mainly shot from the point of view where Tony was working for Keith Richards and Anita Pallenberg," says Dominguez. "There are shots of their son, Marlon, as well as the band and all of their friends and associates. There are some standout locations such as Keith's Sussex home Redlands, lots of Polaroids from Ronnie Wood's house in Richmond, the Wick, and their exile to France – we've got a lot of pictures from that period from Villa Nellcote."

Among the stand-outs from the collection are a shot of a wide-eyed Brian Jones tripping on acid at the South Kensington flat that he shared with Pallenberg, and one of Richards working the mixing desk at Olympic Studios during the recording of the Stones' 1969's album *Let It Bleed*. Other unseen shots feature Richards, Mick Jagger and Marianne Faithful visiting Tangier after the police drugs bust at Redlands in early 1967.

"Tony was one of two photographers that had that sort of access," says Dominguez. "He was there day and night taking very primal and candid shots."

As well as not previously knowing about the photos, Dominguez says he was unaware of his grandfather's association with the Stones, including some of the more unsavoury aspects that he was involved with, such as attending to Richards's chemical needs.

"My mum would have him over for Sunday dinners and he was quiet, just sat on the sofa and he didn't say a lot," he says. "I had no idea that he was that guy."

According to Dominguez, the collection came to light after the passing of his father – Spanish Tony's son – in 2021.

"My [maternal] granddad went up in the loft and he sort of moved some boxes and saw some pictures and he said: 'Have you seen these?' Obviously my dad knew they were there, but he didn't want to do anything with them because it was probably a reminder that Tony wasn't a great dad to him. Those pictures probably brought up a lot of bad memories. And then, slowly but surely, my brother began to piece together how priceless and valuable and important these pictures are. When my dad passed away last December, we decided that we should do something with them."

Dominguez has formed Spanish Tony Media in order to deal with commercial and others aspects of making the photos available, and some of them have already made their way into the public domain.

"We released some images to the BBC, and so we had three Polaroids in the Charlie Watts edition of *My Life As A Rolling Stone*," Dominguez explains. Other plans for their use include an upcoming documentary about Anita Pallenberg.

In addition to a mooted coffee-table book and exhibitions, fans will be able to own their own copies. "We'll showcase the pictures we like best and they'll be available as limited-edition prints of about twenty-five or fifty," says Dominguez. **JM**

Information on limited-edition prints and more at spanishtonymedia.com



RIP

Thank you
and good night.

John Hartman

March 18, 1950 – December 29, 2021

The Doobie Brothers have belatedly revealed the passing of their co-founding original drummer, who died last December at the age of 72. John Hartman was a band member from the band's debut in 1971 until the Grammy-winning *Minute By Minute*, before retiring in '79. He then returned for the albums *Cycles* and *Brotherhood*. Hartman was also a part of the Doobies' induction to the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in 2020. The group described him as a "wild spirit, great drummer and showman".

David Malachowski

January 16, 1955 – September 29, 2022

The members of American progressive rockers Pavlov's Dog were "heartbroken" by the loss of guitarist David Malachowski. The 67-year-old joined Pavlov's Dog in 2018, and also played with Reckless, Savoy Brown and Shania Twain, among others. "David always knew the right lick to play at the right time," said a band statement. "He sonically brought us to a new level with the enormity of his sound and versatility." Cause of death is yet to be announced.

Loretta Lynn

April 14, 1932 – October 4, 2022

During a career that spanned six decades, country-rock singer and songwriter Loretta Lynn released more than 60 albums and won three Grammy awards. Her signature tune, 1970's *Coal Miner's Daughter*, was autobiographical and the subject matter for much of her material, including *X*, which was inspired by the double standards faced by divorced women. Lynn was 90 when she died of unknown cause while asleep at her Tennessee home.

Gord 'Piledriver' Kirchin

September 23, 1961 – September 22, 2022

Gord 'Piledriver' Kirchin, the vocalist with Canadian cult metal favourites Piledriver has lost a long battle with lung cancer. Famous for outlandish song titles including *Sex With Satan*, the Toronto band released two notable albums – *Metal Inquisition* and *Stay Ugly* – in the 80s, and re-emerged with a third, *Metal Manifesto*, in 2008. Less than a month before he died, Kirchin, 60, had posted optimistically about beating cancer and getting "back to living", but it was not to be.



Ray Edenton

November 3, 1926 – September 21, 2022

Born in Virginia, Ray Edenton was a noted session guitar player whose work can be heard on many vintage recordings, including 1957's *Wake Up Little Susie* by the Everly Brothers, and songs by Elvis Presley, Leon Russell and Neil Young. No cause of death has been announced for the 95-year-old.

Steve 'Ze Suicide' Roberts

Died October 13, 2022

The drummer with UK Subs, who played with the band at their commercial peak during the late 70s, took his own life, according to his wife Jude. Although he suffered from lifelong depression, Roberts took his nickname from Bowie's song *Rock 'N' Roll Suicide*. He was 68.



Tom Springfield

July 2, 1934 – July 27, 2022

The songwriting brother of Dusty Springfield and writer of many of The Seekers' hits, Tom Springfield (pictured) has died aged 88. He was born Dionysius Patrick O'Brien, and upon the formation of the band The Springfields with his sister Mary O'Brien, she became Dusty Springfield and he Tom Springfield.

Paul Startin

Died September 14, 2022

Londoner Paul Startin was the singer and violinist with British folk act Bellowhead. Although they are left "devastated" by his unexpected loss at 51, the group's November tour of the UK will take place as planned, as they believe "he would have wanted it to be so".



WELCOME BACK

Ruts DC

Brit politicians lay their cards on the table with a new album and more calls to rise up against the system.

DURING AN EARLIER incarnation known as The Ruts, these politically charged Londoners notched several anthemic hits including *Babylon's Burning* in 1979. Reborn as Ruts DC following the death of frontman Malcolm Owen, they ran until 1983. Guitarist, bassist and frontman John 'Segs' Jennings, who reunited the band in 2007, previews the band's new album *Counterculture?*.

Last time you spoke to Classic Rock (for 2016's *Music Must Destroy*) you said of governments: "I used to believe that who you voted for made a difference, but not any more."

The only thing that's changed is that we weren't given the chance to vote for a prime minister. Not this one, nor the one before, or the one before that. Worse still, we weren't given a chance to vote against them.

***Counterculture?* wants us to rebel against what's going on, not sit on the sofa. In the press release you invite: "Come and borrow my lighter."**

That's an allegory for: "Wake up!" What's happening now is like forced fascism. There are people whose heads I would like to see on poles at the Tower Of London.

Do you believe that politicism in music really changes anything?

No. But these are my personal politics, and although I'm sixty-six I still feel really angry. Our right to peaceful protest has been taken and away, and if it all goes wrong we won't be able to rebel. They can turn off all our phones and computers.

Stylistically, Ruts DC are not simply punks. Tracks such as *Born Innocent* confirm an appreciation of reggae. All of this band loves reggae, soul and

Tamla Motown. Ruts DC are a crossover of all those styles, including punk.

Last time out you also acknowledged the influence of Pink Fairies, Nirvana, Killing Joke and even The Who. We could hear Hawkwind in the song *The Question Is...*

Yeah, there's a lot of Hawkwind on the album. But then if Hawkwind are not a counterculture band, who is? [laughs].

While your 2016 album *Music Must Destroy* had cameos from Henry Rollins, Captain Sensible and Adam & The Ants guitarist Marco Pirroni, among others. This time you've gone it alone. Well, James Warburn from The Pretenders plays a guitar solo on

Faces In The Sky, we just didn't make a big deal of it. Marco [Pirroni] really wanted to be on the album, but being in lockdown made it really difficult.

Ruts DC's UK tour in November and December has former Adverts frontman TV Smith as support. Presumably he's an old friend of yours?

Well, TV started out before us. The Adverts' *Gary Gilmore's Eyes* [1977] was already out there. I had the privilege of playing that song with him a few years ago at the 100 Club, though because [ex-Adverts bassist] Gaye Advert was in the crowd I got nervous and fumbled the bass line.

Are you still doing this for Malcolm Owen, lost to a heroin overdose, and Paul Fox, the guitarist who died of cancer in 2007?

It's all for those guys. Foxy's on one shoulder and Malcolm's on the other. **DL**

Counterculture? is available now via *Sosumi Recordings*.

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Leppard/Crüe Shows Confirmed

Bands will co-headline dates across Europe next summer.

FOLLOWING A SUMMER of triumph on The Stadium Tour, Def Leppard and Mötley Crüe have confirmed five co-headlining outdoor shows in Britain and Ireland as part of a follow-up named The World Tour. At press time it was uncertain who else would be appearing on The World Tour besides its co-headliners. "The bill will be different in different territories," Leppard frontman Joe Elliott tells *Classic Rock*.

Dates confirmed so far are: Sheffield Bramall Lane May 22, London Wembley Stadium July 1, Lancashire Lytham Festival 2, Dublin Marlay Park 4, Glasgow Hampden Park 6. VIP packages available from motley.com and defleppard.com.

"We're beyond thrilled to bring this massive stadium tour to cities all over the world, kicking off Europe in Sheffield where it all started for us," says Elliott.

A statement from Mötley Crüe added: "We had an incredible time in North America this summer and we truly can't wait to take the show around the globe." **DL**



Def 'Reservoir Dogs' Leppard: coming for you next summer.

KK Returns To Priest For HOF

Ian Hill wonders if 'reunion' could "kick-start something".

JUDAS PRIEST HAVE confirmed that former members KK Downing and Les Binks are both set to be a part of the band's induction to the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame (which will have taken place in Los Angeles by the time you read this).

Perhaps surprisingly given the war of words caused by guitarist Downing's exit from Priest more than a decade ago, both sides seem happy to approach the event in as gentlemanly a way as possible.

"It'll go by in a flash, won't it?" Downing told *Ultimate Classic Rock*. "I think we've probably got eight or nine minutes. It'll be quite something to look forward to, just to get up there and crank the amps up and just do it once again, for that short moment in time."

Bass player Ian Hill, Priest's only ever-present member, hopes the shared experience could bring the band's problems with Downing to an end.

"He's going to play some songs with us there. It might kick-start something, I don't know. On the other hand, he might pull us all apart," Hill said with a laugh. **DL**



NEWS

Queen are to release a new, previously unheard single featuring Freddie Mercury on vocals. *Face It Alone* was recorded during the sessions for their 1989 album *The Miracle*. It's also included in an eight-disc box set edition of *The Miracle*, released on November 18, the same day as the single.

US authorities believe that **Jon Schaffer**, the former Iced Earth frontman, has gone into hiding following his part in the 2021 Capitol building insurrection. Schaffer was arrested and charged with a number of crimes, including attacking police officers with bear spray.

Joe Bonamassa says preparation for a fifth album from **Black Country Communion**, the supergroup featuring guitarist Bonamassa, bassist/vocalist Glenn Hughes, keyboard player Derek Sherinian and drummer Jason Bonham, is under way.

New deluxe editions of the Ronnie James Dio-fronted **Black Sabbath** albums *Heaven And Hell* and *Mob Rules* are released next month. Each is available on two CDs, or as a two-LP set, and both feature remastered audio plus rare and previously unreleased music.



Judas Priest have revealed that guitarist **Richie Faulkner** (pictured) underwent a second round of heart surgery in August, nearly 12 months after he suffered a near-fatal tear in his heart on stage at the Louder Than Life festival.



WELCOME BACK

Brant Bjork

The desert-rock pioneer talks new music, old bands, and how his sons might carry the torch.

NOW IN HIS twentieth year of making solo records, former Kyuss and Fu Manchu drummer Brant Bjork has just released *Bougainvillea Suite*, his fourteenth album, a typically hypnotic eight-tracker of laid-back, funkily nostalgic grooves, recorded in Joshua Tree, California.

Why *Bougainvillea Suite*?

The title's been in my back pocket for many years. It represents a comfort zone, a shelter from the storm. Bougainvillea is a vine flower that I grew up with. It's plentiful in the desert, and has a tranquility about it. It went with the vibe of the record.

Who's on the album?

I play a majority of the instruments, and then my long-time solo band drummer Ryan Güt is playing keyboards. We had a lot of fun getting some kind of classic keyboard sounds from back in the day.

There's definitely some Doors influence detectable on the record.

Of course! I was telling him: "Man, we gotta get that Ray Manzarek or Iron Butterfly kind of vibe." I just love sixties music, so that's quite evident here. Ryan's also the drummer in our band Stöner.

We've seen the name, tell us more.

It's Ryan on drums, myself on guitar and vocals and Nick Oliveri on bass and vocals. It was conceived during the lockdown of 2020. Stöner exists to have fun, and that's what we've been doing ever since. It grew legs, got up and started running fast.

You have been at the forefront of desert and stoner rock since the late eighties with Kyuss. What impact did the band have?

I hear from some younger bands that we

were influential, and that's flattering. But I was a longhair punk rocker and I've had my head down for twenty-five years, so I haven't really paid attention [laughs].

The name Kyuss came from *Dungeons & Dragons*. Were you a nerdy punk?

I was nerdy in the sense of being obsessive about stuff. I wasn't good at school, but I liked dragons and medieval things, so I got the game, but it gathered dust in my closet for years. When the band formed we needed a name. I saw 'Sons Of Kyuss' on this game, and that was that.

"I love sixties music, so that's quite evident [on the new album]."

After Kyuss split, you, John Garcia and Nick Oliveri went out as Kyuss Lives!, but then Josh Homme and Scott Reeder put a stop to it. Is that all resolved now?

I guess, technically, spiritually, literally... What happened was a real shame, and that broke my heart. Kyuss was very dysfunctional, but that's what made the music, really.

It's twenty years since your debut solo record, *Jalamanta*. What did that mean to you?

It was arguably the most liberating moment for me as a musician. I was just some desert punk, yet to think of myself as professional. This gave me confidence, and it turned into a career.

On Instagram there's a post of you with your sons, Swan and Brazil, who look like chips off the block.

Swan is one hell of a drummer. He's getting into guitar now, and asking me for clothes. Brazil's a great dancer and loves to sing. He's got his mother's business mind, too. He'll be an insane manager. **JK**

Bougainvillea Suite is out now via Heavy Psych Sounds.



★ HIGH HOPES

Kira Mac

|||||
"On our album we've got country rock, metal, some indie-type rock too."

A band who cast their musical net wide, here's a (not yet big) Mac worth having a taste of.

THINGS ARE HAPPENING for Kira Mac. The band's first three singles all made it on to the A-list of Planet Rock radio. In July they were a hit at the Steelhouse Festival (their biggest show to date by far). Pre-orders are healthy for their debut album *Chaos Is Calling*, due later this month. Additionally in November they'll embark on their first UK tour, and will also support The Sweet. And this is all without a label behind them, all off their own back and out of their own pocket. "My mum's our accountant," says singer Rhiannon Kira Hill, aka Kira Mac. "None of us five can be trusted with money!"

The band are completed by guitarist/songwriter Joe Worrall, guitarist Alex Novakovic, bassist Bret Barnes and prodigious young drummer Max Rhead. Hill met Worrall in 2015, when they were both studying at music college in Manchester, and they bonded over a shared love for Black Stone Cherry, Alter Bridge and Nickelback. "I don't care what anyone says," Hill asserts, "Chad [Kroeger, Nickelback frontman] has got it going on. He knows his stuff. He's just got the magic."

There's also a little magic in Kira Mac's own glossy, modern-day riff-rock. *One Way Ticket* is a bolted-on radio anthem with a downtuned guitar hook, big chorus and a country-rock twang. In the striking video for the catchy-heavy *Hit Me Again*, Hill sings

with a boa constrictor draped over her shoulders, Alice Cooper/Britney Spears-style. Worrall came up with *Dead Man Walking* after a Metallica jag – its slinky, evil riff is delivered via a huge wall of fuzzed-up guitars. He was inspired to write *Mississippi Swingin'*, Kira Mac's new, fourth single, when Hill got him into country star Jason Aldean.

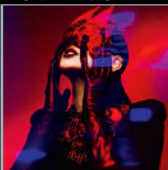
"Your influences always show," Hill reckons. "Rock is always changing. There's stuff coming through like Måneskin and Yungblud, but then there's the classic rock stuff – Dirty Holly, Dorothy and Alter Bridge – and we turn our hand better to that side of things, because that's what we love."

Born and bred in Stoke, Hill is warm and down-to-earth; on record, video and stage she's a firecracker, a real presence. Coming up through the covers circuit in the 2010s, she played her share of girl-and-guitar country gigs, and it was after one too many bookers assumed she was a Rihanna tribute act that she took the name Kira Mac. After college she performed on cruise ships, singing everything from AC/DC to Miranda Lambert to Wham!. When she finally came ashore, in 2019, Worrall was waiting for her, with a pile of new songs and a plan. The work they've put in since is starting to pay off.

"We're called Kira Mac, but it isn't my band," Hill/Mac stresses. "It's the boys' band too, and we're a solid unit. It's close-knit, family vibes." **GM**

More info on Kira Mac at kiramac.com

FOR FANS OF...



"Every single song on Dorothy's album *Gifts From The Holy Ghost* is completely different," says Rhiannon Hill. "On our album we've tried to write something for everybody. We've got country rock, metal, some indie-type rock too. *Gifts From The Holy Ghost* is also blues rock with a female vocal, and Dorothy's one of my heroes."

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Garbage

Only Happy When It Rains

Band in need of a singer meet singer in need of work. One of the first songs they worked on together, it was a signature hit and is still one of the first songs on the band's set-lists

Words: **Emma Johnston**

Only *Happy When It Rains*, Garbage's wry celebration of the darker sides of life, which introduced some much-needed electronic sparkle to the post-grunge rock landscape, predates the arrival of the band's peerless frontwoman Shirley Manson, but it's impossible to imagine anyone else embodying the song so perfectly. It's also difficult to believe it's been almost 30 years since its release – even now it sounds thrillingly futuristic.

Its bones had been built by guitarists/bassists Duke Erikson and Steve Marker and drummer Butch Vig, the latter still surfing the critical and commercial success of his production work on Nirvana's era-defining *Nevermind* album. Radio at the time was still stuffed with earnest young men riding those coattails and airing their emotional pain in a bid for stardom. But Garbage wanted to create something poppier, more fun, more interesting and less wedded to the confines of analogue authenticity.

Enter Shirley Manson. The no-nonsense Scot was about to be out of work, as her band, Angelfish, were in the middle of imploding, and she was looking for something to do for the summer rather than bum around on the dole. The other members of Garbage were searching for a female singer to appear on a couple of tracks. Recommendations were made, and the four met up for the first time in a London hotel on April 8, 1994.

After a couple of false starts at the audition stage, Manson ended up heading out to Wisconsin to work with the band in their home studio, where they presented her with the sketched outlines of *Stupid Girl*, *Vow*, *Queer* and *Only Happy When It Rains*. The latter's similarity to a song by some of her countrymen initially jarred.

"I was a bit shocked because it was reminiscent lyrically of the Jesus And Mary Chain," she remembers. "Being a Scot, the likeness was glaringly apparent. So I was a wee bit uncomfortable, like I feel like my country might have done this before. At the same time I also understood that everybody in Garbage had a similar psyche to me, we all grew up in the

northern hemisphere and we all really do love depressing music and the rain, so I felt it was like a clever nursery rhyme. I love that it was talking about stuff in a tongue-in-cheek, ironic manner."

While it quickly became apparent that Manson was the perfect person to front the band – striking, fiery, fearless, forthright and charismatic, she was a rock star waiting to happen – those first recording sessions are something she looks back on as a very fraught and lonely time. The rest of the band were older than her, from a similar background, and had been friends for years, whereas she was a young woman, straight over from Edinburgh, who knew no one.

"It's hard to be creatively brave with people you don't know, and who are all a lot older than you, who have been accorded a kind of respect that white men enjoy that women rarely do," she explains.

"I've always been the outsider in Garbage. I always will be. That's been something that I've had to carry my entire career. But it's also been

a spectacularly successful creative endeavour that we've enjoyed together. So I have to assume that some of the difficulties and awkwardness have been good for us in a way. They were just what I needed, and I was absolutely what they needed. But anybody can relate to being the outsider in the room. It's not the nicest of feelings. And I was economically strapped. I didn't have any money. I had nothing. I was in the Midwest of America pretty much by myself with no money, no car, no friends. It was fucking miserable."

None of this is to say she didn't hold her own in the studio. A famously forthright character, she brought her ideas to the table in order to shape Garbage's self-titled debut album which, released in 1995, went platinum in the States and the UK. A lot of that success is down to *Only Happy When It Rains* and its accompanying video, which became a staple on MTV.

"None of us were prepared for the way it

took off," Manson says. "I had been taken into Geffen Records shortly before we released our album, and I was told it's going to be very hard to get anyone to interview you because people are only going to care about Butch and his production career. I'm quaking in my shoes, because I've already been told before we start that we've failed. But we grew exponentially overnight.

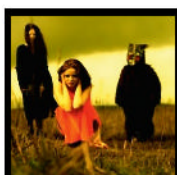
"Of course I enjoyed it, it was really exciting. But it was also stressful because the press were always telling us that we weren't real, that these are three producers and a girl. It was still a very sexist, patriarchal, misogynistic tone to music journalism back then. It took a lot of the joy out of this explosion of success away from all of us when people are saying that the men in the band are old and look like they smell of piss, and I look like a prostitute. It takes its toll."

"I was in the Midwest of America with no money, no car, no friends. It was f*king miserable."**

Fortunately Manson is made of strong stuff, and 30 years on, *Only Happy When It Rains* remains an essential moment in the band's set-list.

"I think the reason that first Garbage record really connected was because it was a breath of fresh air at a time when white male rock was really dominating, and had gotten quite serious," she offers. "Every night, the audience goes mad for that song, and they sing along. The song has more depth to me now than it did at the time that we recorded it. Into each life, some rain must fall, right? Because you have to be able to roll with the shit that comes in every life. Everyone can relate to that. So when I hear people sing along to it, I'm touched by the thought that everybody in this audience has had their heart broken, and it's being turned into gold as we sing. That feels really amazing." ●

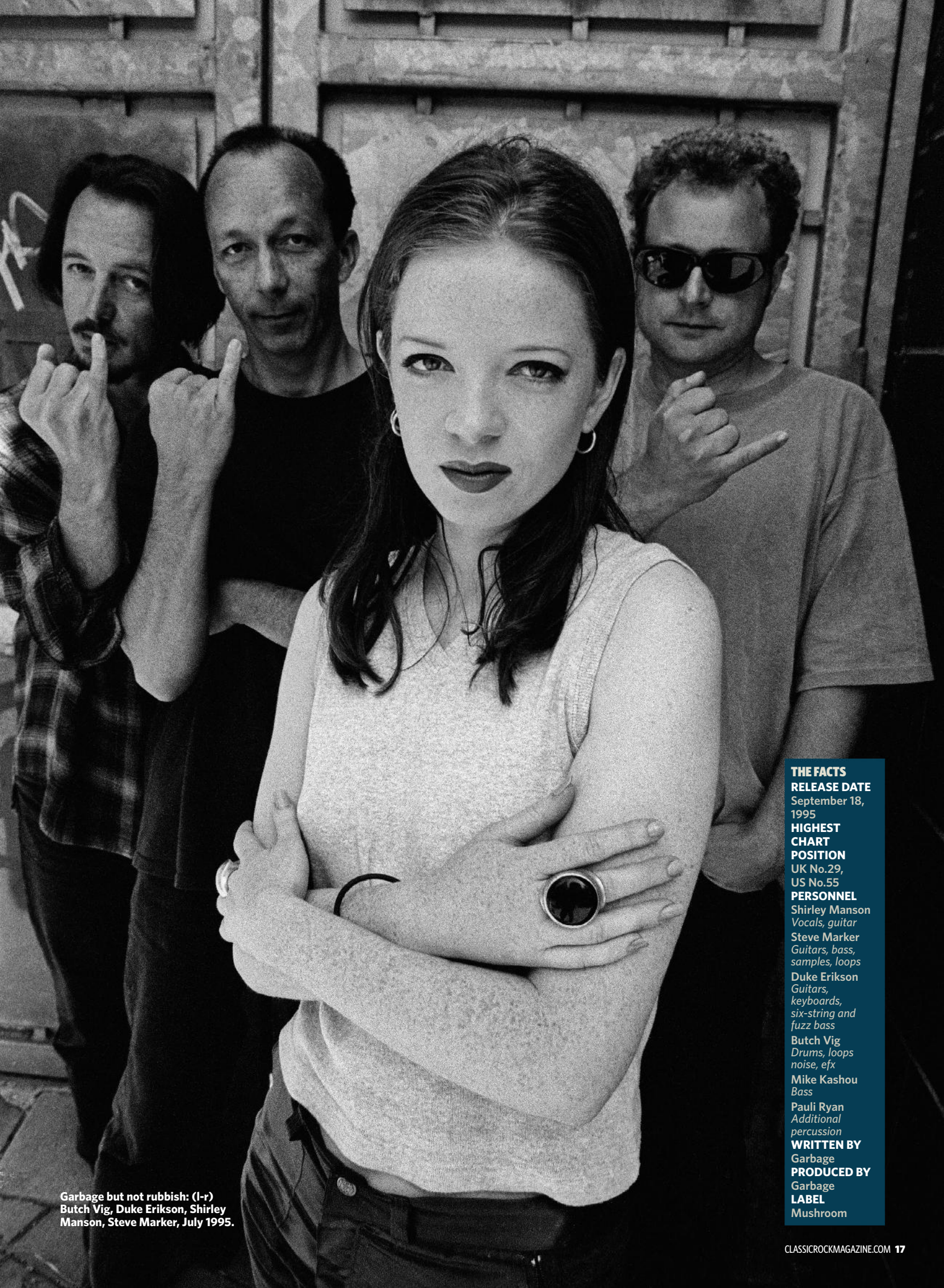
Garbage Anthology is out now via BMG.



WET WET WET

The video for *Only Happy When It Rains*, which dominated MTV on its release, was shot on an unusually – but fittingly – cold and wet day in Los Angeles, and was directed by Sam Bayer, who also shot the iconic clip for Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit*.

"We shot all this footage on a lot in Hollywood with these Edward Gorey figures holding umbrellas and whatnot," says Manson, "and none of it made the cut. None of it at all. It was funny, because it was a complicated shoot, we had children all dressed up in costumes. But we were all in such a euphoric high that it just all went by in this crazy flash of time. Working with Sam Bayer was really rewarding. We had great chemistry with him. He's really high-energy and he brought this madness to the set that rubbed off on us."



Garbage but not rubbish: (l-r)
Butch Vig, Duke Erikson, Shirley
Manson, Steve Marker, July 1995.

THE FACTS
RELEASE DATE
September 18,
1995

**HIGHEST
CHART
POSITION**

UK No.29,
US No.55

PERSONNEL

Shirley Manson

Vocals, guitar

Steve Marker

Guitars, bass,

samples, loops

Duke Erikson

Guitars,

keyboards,

six-string and

fuzz bass

Butch Vig

Drums, loops

noise, efx

Mike Kashou

Bass

Pauli Ryan

Additional

percussion

WRITTEN BY

Garbage

PRODUCED BY

Garbage

LABEL

Mushroom

Peter Buck

The former R.E.M. guitarist on his old band, working with Luke Haines, and not having record labels tell him what to do.

Interview: Rob Hughes

Eleven years after the dissolution of R.E.M., their former songwriter-guitarist Peter Buck appears to be more in demand than ever. Aside from busying himself with forthcoming albums for supergroups Filthy Friends, The Baseball Project and The No Ones, he has just released *All The Kids Are Super Bummed Out*, his second collaboration with ex-Auteurs leader Luke Haines. The pair conspire to make an often spectacular racket, featuring some of the most ferocious guitar work of Buck's career, wonky synths and Haines's deeply surreal, comic-sinister wordplay. Regular contributors Scott McCaughey and Linda Pitmon are on board too, as is legendary Patti Smith guitarist Lenny Kaye.

Was there always a plan to make a second album with Luke?

Oh yeah. The first one was so easy. We just did it over the internet. We were going to be in England in April 2020 for a tour, we had a few new songs, and the plan was to make a band record. But like everyone else in the world, things didn't go quite according to plan. So we ended up doing it just like the last one [2020's *Beat Poetry For Survivalists*], recording in our various basements and attics. It's interesting working with Luke, because it's not a group that's really played together. It's a case of piling stuff on and seeing where it goes.

Is it true that the Luke collaboration began when you bought one of his paintings of Lou Reed a few years back?

Yeah, he did it for his *New York In The '70s* record [2014]. I like to have art by people that I know and like. I wrote to him, and he suggested I send over a couple of tracks. We made the whole first record without ever meeting. It wasn't till I was over there touring with Filthy Friends that we actually sat down and had a drink together. So prior to our first tour, I'd spent one hour with him.

Working with Luke is really interesting, because I never know what he's going to do with a piece of music I send him. His melodic sense is really strange, in a good way. I think this record is a lot better than the first one. It's a really powerful record, partly because we realised there are no rules whatsoever. Lyrically, it feels like Luke's sending messages from the front, where everything's falling apart and all that's left are B-level celebrities and this nostalgic path that's not really nostalgic.

How did you arrive at the title?

I was talking to my neighbour, who's a doctor, before the vaccine was available: "Are you okay? How's it going?" And he said: "I'm fine. I've been working with infectious diseases all my life, but it's just that all the kids are super bummed out. Not just mine, every kid." So it just worked its way in there. I suggested the title to Luke and he loved it.

Besides Luke, you seem to be dipping in and out of so many different bands at the moment: Filthy Friends, The No Ones, The Baseball Project, The Minus 5. Do you prefer this more low-key career to the one you had with R.E.M.?

Yeah. I'm really grateful that I got to experience the heights that

R.E.M. reached, but when it was over I didn't have a lot of interest in pursuing that type of largeness again. I don't think it would be available to me anyway. But there are certainly ways that I could have extended that popularity – get a group with someone else famous, get a publicist, all that crap. I see these other bands, they're older guys and they're trying to keep up. But all I really want to do is write songs, play them and record them.

When were you happiest during your time in R.E.M.?

The eighties, I think. But when it got really big, I don't know if anyone really enjoys that. When the non-musical stuff became so intense, it took away some of the pleasure for me. It's just the stuff where you kind of wake up and go: "God, I don't really want to have my picture taken today. And I don't really want to pretend to be an actor in some video where I can't act." I loved playing Glastonbury and playing in front of lots of people and selling multiple millions of records, but it was never the reason I did it. And when we got to the point where we decided that it was the end, it felt like a great shared experience. I wouldn't change it, but I'm not gonna go back to it.

So it all ended at the right time?

I think so. The last two records were really strong. But I just felt like no matter how good our last record was, it wasn't really our time any more. And that's fair, I understand that. And we were lucky. The last tour we did, we were still playing to huge amounts of people. We went to South America, which was like being The Beatles. So everyone felt like, yeah, this is a really good stopping point.

I'm guessing it was pretty liberating for you to get away from all that expectation, so you could collaborate with whoever and do things at your own pace?

I'm really lucky that my phone rings and I get to be able to work with people. But I only do things if there's a chance I'm going to learn something or it's going to be fun, ideally both. I just spent a month in Brazil with a bunch of people that I've never really played with much. It was kind of a slightly different musical language, and I picked up some clues on that. I worked with a guy named Nando Reis, who's really popular down there and who I've already recorded with. It was super-fun. I'm at the point where I don't want a record company telling me how to make records. I want to give a record company a record, and say: "Here it is. Do you like it?" And if not, that's cool and we'll walk away. That applies to everything I do now.

Is it too early to ask if there's likely to be a third album from you and Luke?

Oh, we're definitely going to work on another one. One of the things I'm recording today is something for the next record. We have shows booked in February, at least. Ideally, when we get around to touring, we'll already have a few new songs. Who knows? Maybe we'll just continue working together remotely, because it's also really cheap. **🎧**

All The Kids Are Super Bummed is out now via Cherry Red Records.



Peter Buck: enjoyed the R.E.M. experience, but wouldn't want to go back to it.

"All I really want to do is write songs, play them and record them."



**6 THINGS
YOU NEED TO
KNOW ABOUT...**

The Hu

They have a message; horses are important; the band are official Mongolian cultural ambassadors...

Interview: **Fraser Lewry**

THE HU'S OVERNIGHT success has been a long while in the making. The seeds for Mongolia's most successful export since Genghis Khan united the nomadic tribes and set out to conquer Europe and Asia in the 13th century were planted a decade ago, when the band's producer Dashka started a musical project to pay tribute to his father.

This kind of connection to history runs deep in the Hu's music, and *Rumble Of Thunder*, the second album from the inventors of 'hunnu rock', finds the fearsome foursome telling stories, communing with nature and offering some pretty good guidance about how we could all live our lives a little better.

"There are messages that we try to deliver," says frontman Gala. "And even though we sing in

a different language, everybody seems to understand what we're trying to say."

The Hu are undertaking their own conquest, one fan at a time.

Classic Rock spoke to Gala on the road in Ohio, where The Hu are partway through a lengthy US tour with Megadeth and Five Finger Death Punch. And while some fans are familiar with the band through the success of their videos, others need a little convincing.

"Sometimes those fans are startled by our show," says Gala. "But after one or two songs they get used to it and act as if they've known us for the longest time. At the end of the performance they'll be chanting and clapping for us."

The mysterious Dashka is their mastermind.

The band's producer – himself a singer – started with a single song for his father, and slowly assembled the band to reflect his vision of hunnu rock, bringing in experienced musicians he knew would be perfect for The Hu. Gala worked with the national orchestra, Enkush was in another band, Temka was an arranger, and Jaya taught wind instruments to college students.

"It evolved into the thing we have today, with Dashka's dreams of the hunnu rock genre created, with The Hu selected to represent it," says Gala. "Dashka is behind the scenes of everything."

They're inspired by their own instruments.

Gala plays the morin khuur, otherwise known as



The Hu: Mongolia's biggest four-piece.

the horse-head violin, but his is not like other morin khuurs. His has been customised, to make it more real, more vivid, and more inspirational.

"Normally, the horse's head faces the audience," Gala explains. "But Dashka asked: 'Why can't it face the singer? Why can't the horse show emotion?' So if you look closely at our instruments, you'll see that the horse is actually neighing, with its teeth displayed. It's really lifelike, and faces the performer, showing the emotion of the performer himself."

Horses are important.

It's a well-worn cliché that Mongolians can ride before they can walk, but it's not far from the truth. You'll even find horses – and other animals – in The Hu's rhythms and instrumentation.

"Every Mongolian, no matter their age – even a toddler – will ride without fear, without a care in the world," says Gala. "It is in our DNA. We know how to ride without being taught, we respect horses sincerely, and we have a great spiritual connection with them."

The Hu are a product of globalisation – in a good way.

The Hu's videos are glorious widescreen advertisements for the epic nature of both the band's stirring music and Mongolia's landscape. Now the band are officially appointed cultural ambassadors for the country.

"YouTube and social media and the globalisation of modern society has helped us

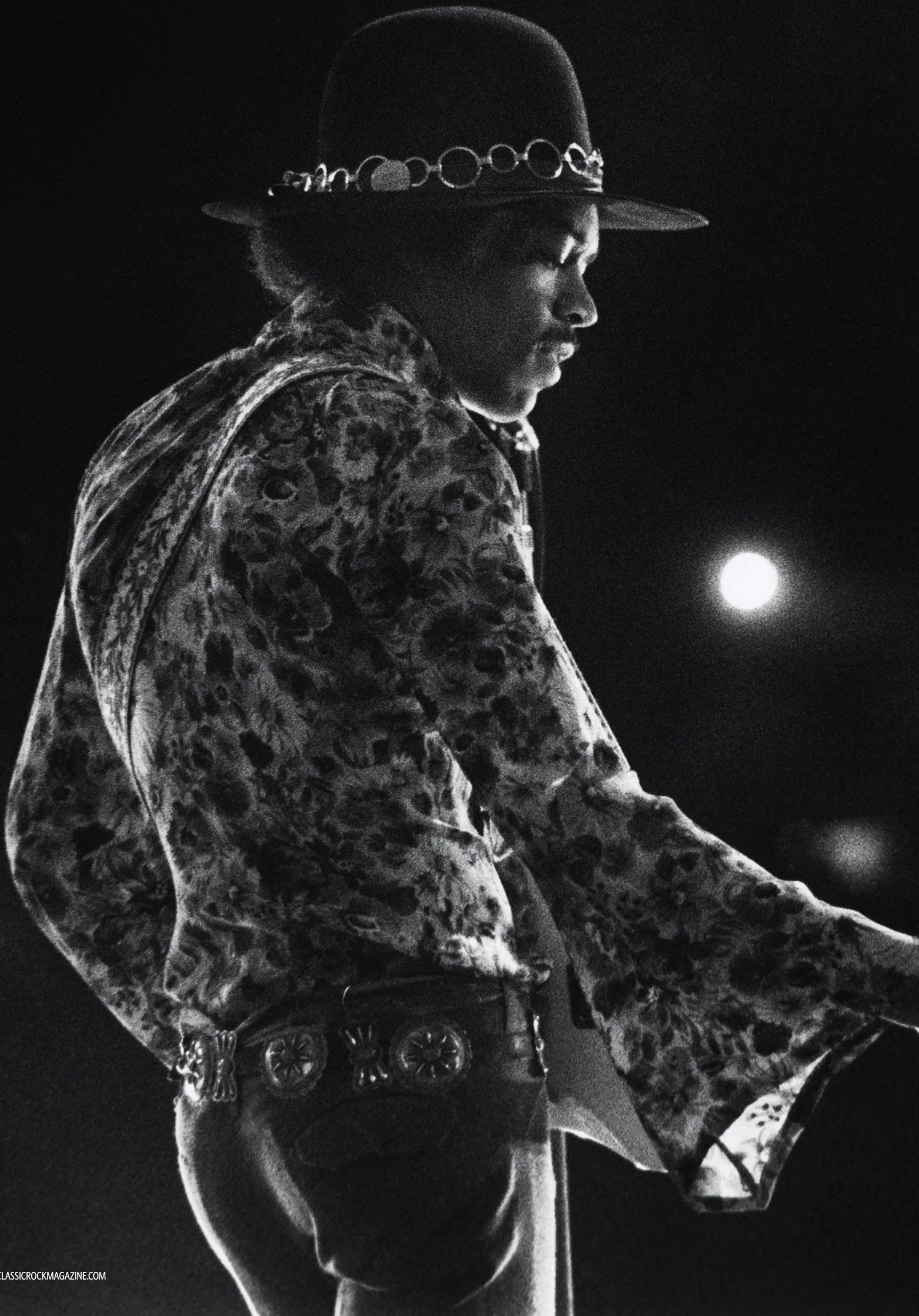
get the messages we're trying to deliver to the world out there," says Gala: "to be environmentally aware, to be friendly, to be self-aware, to have strength inside, to be inspired to do better, and to be a better version of yourself."

What The Hu do next might be a surprise.

Album number three is coming soon, Gala tells us, and, having worked with the likes of Lzzy Hale and Jacoby Shaddix, there's plenty of scope for more of that sort of thing. Or other things.

"The great thing about the hunnu rock genre is that we can work with anyone," says Gala. "Rock, pop, hip-hop, R&B, whatever." ●

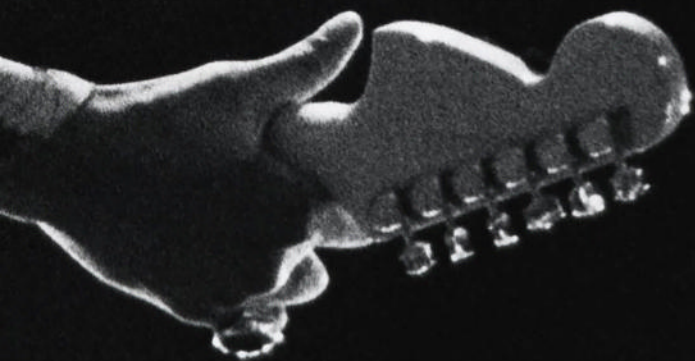
Rumble Of Thunder is out now via Better Noise.



EXPERIENCE THIS!

He was the greatest guitarist ever to pick up the instrument, but what is sometimes overlooked is his talent as a songwriter, a singer and also how he often made other writers' songs his own. As a celebration of **Jimi Hendrix** in the month when he would have turned 80, stars and those who knew him choose his greatest songs, relive personal memories and reflect on his legacy.

Words: **Henry Yates, David Sinclair, Jason Sidwell, Dave Ling, Milton Mermikides, Jonny Scaramanga, Amit Sharma, Jonathan Horsley, Chris Bird**





Kissing the sky: Hendrix in full flow at the Fillmore West in San Francisco, February 1968.

ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER

Alex Lifeson: "I always loved *Manic Depression*, but I think *All Along The Watchtower* is really special, even though, funnily enough, it's not one of Hendrix's songs. The arrangement is so striking and beautiful. Whenever I hear it on the radio or in passing, I'm instantly transported to a certain time in my life. When you listen to those acoustic guitars and the way it's recorded – and this goes for the whole album too – there's something that's so creamy and warm and enveloping. It's the sound of that song and the way all the parts cross over. It's just a fabulous example of Hendrix at his best."

Bob Dylan said *All Along The Watchtower* was "a small song of mine that nobody paid any attention to".

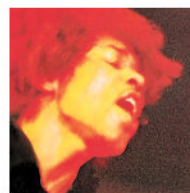
Released in September 1968 as the lead single from *Electric Ladyland*, *All Along The Watchtower* was not so much a cover as a song entirely reinvented. To hear it was to almost forget the existence of the original, which now seemed a mere blueprint by comparison. The single reached No.5 in

the UK and No.20 in the US, making it Hendrix's breakthrough success in his homeland. To date it has been streamed on Spotify more than 560 million times – more than twice the total of the song in second place, *Purple Haze*.

As for Dylan, he was magnanimous. "It overwhelmed me, really. [Hendrix] had such talent, he could find things inside a song and vigorously develop them. He found things that other people wouldn't think of finding in there. He probably improved upon it by the spaces he was using. I took licence from his version, actually, and continue to do it to this day."

ANGEL

Six months after his death, Hendrix lived again in March 1971, as *Angel* led out the first posthumous album, *The Cry Of Love*, and announced that the late guitarist's catalogue would be a going concern. As you'd expect of Little Wing's sister song (for a time the two tracks even shared a title), *Angel* was a peerless moment of glisten and shimmer, with a valedictory chorus that seemed purpose-made for the star's passing (although Hendrix had actually



written it about a dream that foresaw his mother's death). With a chorus that punctured the mainstream consciousness, for many *Angel* is his greatest ballad.

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

The Experience's debut album might have opened up with *Foxy Lady*'s chart-tooled swagger, but the final straight had a bolder trick up its sleeve, with a title track that signposted the epic studio productions to come. Mitch Mitchell's military drum tattoo was the anchor of a free-form sonic tapestry that bent to Hendrix's will, sweeping up backwards guitars that were more raga than rock, a solo seemingly beamed in from another track, and a woozy call to arms that urged the listener to ditch the denizens of their 'measly little world' – far better, Jimi suggests, to 'hold hands and watch the sunrise from the bottom of the sea'.

BOLD AS LOVE

Uli Jon Roth: "*Bold As Love* is not really a rock song, it's just a masterpiece, an

artistic masterpiece of the first order. It is completely unconventional. Everything about that piece is unconventional. It doesn't follow any established pattern. It is a complete one-off, which is the hallmark of quite a few of Hendrix's best pieces. It has got magical chord changes and a magical key and even more magical guitar solo at the end, and the lyrics are amazing too.

"It is his most beautiful guitar solo, if not the most beautiful solo of all time. What can we learn from this song? We can learn the simple realisation that the greatest songs of all time have not followed the established patterns – very rarely have they followed established patterns, and *Bold As Love* is in that league – as are many of the greatest Beatles songs. So that's a lesson to learn right there."

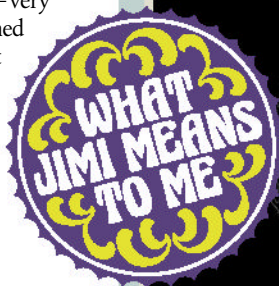
Axis: *Bold As Love*'s semi-title track was redolent of *Little Wing* in the opening measures, but the revelation came at 2:50, when engineer Eddie Kramer unveiled the stereo phasing that he and tape operator George Chkiantz had used to treat the drums. "When Jimi first heard that," Kramer recalled, "he fell off the couch, yelling at me: 'Oh my god, this was in my dream!'" Rising to the occasion, for the outro Jimi played a soulful, album-best solo that climaxes with frantic tremolo picking and, according to Experience bass player Noel Redding, was created on the fly: "The ending and the build-up was all spontaneous between the whole band."

CASTLES MADE OF SAND

Mark Tremonti: "You can't not stumble across a Hendrix lick when you're learning to play guitar. Everybody's been influenced by him in one way or another. Being a guitar player, everybody was always saying he was the 'best guitar player in the world', so at first I was too intimidated to learn his stuff, because I thought it would be way too difficult. When I actually did try it, I realised that it wasn't the technical side of his playing that made people consider him the best, it was his feel, his approach, and all the things and sounds he pioneered."

"*Are You Experienced* was probably the first album I was exposed to, but I think *Purple Haze* might have been the first song I tried to learn on guitar, and of course I've learned *Hey Joe* and a few others over the years. My favourite now would probably be *Castles Made Of Sand*. That's one of those songs that you put on and it just makes you feel good. It's got a lot of emotion and soul. Just a feel-good song."

Eddie Kramer saw this late addition to Axis: *Bold As Love* as "Jimi's imagination run wild". Certainly that's true of the



BILLY F GIBBONS

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

"I had a girlfriend from Texas who found herself on holiday in London, and she had the foresight to pick up a copy of the first Jimi Hendrix Experience record [*Are You Experienced*, '67] and forward it to the States. I had my hands on it early on, certainly before its US release. And I remember standing at the turntable with eyes wide and jaw dropped. I was seventeen when that record landed in my lap and I was ready to just soak it up. There was hours spent just listening to the way he phrased his stuff."

"It was operating on a number of levels. The technique stood out immediately, and it was bolstered by some tone that had not become commonplace. I can almost bet that the engineers who designed the Fender Stratocaster never knew that these sounds would emanate from their handy invention. In the hands of Jimi Hendrix it was otherworldly."

MEETING HENDRIX

When the Jimi Hendrix Experience's tour reached Texas in February 1968, Gibbons's teenaged group the Moving Sidewalks opened the show. They didn't have enough songs of their own to fill their 40-minute slot, and included covers of Hendrix's *Foxy Lady* and *Purple Haze* before Hendrix came on.

"To try and wrap your head around those compositions, it was something so new you didn't quite know where to begin. We were fortunate to be able to interpret our versions of *Foxy Lady* and *Purple Haze*. They were Texas interpretations. On leaving the stage I was grabbed by the shoulders and there was Hendrix smiling. He said: 'I got to meet you. You got a lot of nerve! I like it.'"

FAVOURITE HENDRIX SONGS

"*Foxy Lady* and *Purple Haze* still reign supreme. The mind was twisted with the first album, then when he interpreted *All Along The Watchtower* it went from

Dylan's ownership to suddenly it became Hendrix's song. Then there's *Red House*. You can't overlook Hendrix's interpretation of the blues form. Quite recently they found a version of Hendrix playing an up-tempo version of Bobby Bland's song *Further On Up The Road*. And it's killer! Just wild. There's all sorts of interesting revelations when you find versions of songs where you can just hear the vocal track as it's being recorded. They must have gone back and found some of the original tapes with the vocal track. His singing style was so natural, very much off-the-cuff. He didn't have to go back and re-sing much."

HENDRIX SONGS COVERED BY ZZ TOP

"Hendrix taught me how to do the string squiggle at the beginning of *Foxy Lady*. It's a trick you have to practice, learning the use of, I should call it, controlled vibrato. Combine that with the power of a 100-watt Marshall amp and you can get some crazy tricks going off."

"The other song that really holds intrigue to this day: *Little Miss Lover*. It's either a drummer's delight or a drummer's nightmare. Frank Beard said the challenge is in the right hand playing

quarter notes, and between the snare and the kick playing not only eighth notes but sixteenth notes. And then there's a push beat in the middle of all that. It's really a workout. But if you can get through it, it'll leave you smiling, that's for sure. We played it early on. But we haven't dusted that one off in quite some time."

WHAT MADE HENDRIX SO SPECIAL

"Let's use the word 'willingness'. I was talking about this with Jeff Beck recently. The Stratocaster, the whammy bar, was capable of some pretty dramatic changes in pitch – the dive-bomb effect – and they had yet to perfect a way to keep it in tune. There are some recorded examples of Hendrix just going crazy with the whammy bar and it knocked the guitar pitifully out of tune. But his willingness... he just said 'The hell with it. We're gonna go on!' And go on they did. The other word to use is 'curiosity'. Part of that curiosity was fuelled by the sudden appearance of foot pedals to make all kinds of interesting ways to distress the guitar signal."

"He was always practising. Always curious about the next unusual twist. He was fascinated by Jeff Beck's playing. I have vivid recollections of tip-toeing into Hendrix's hotel room, and he always had a record player, a giant piece of furniture, in his room. He said: 'Man, how do you think Jeff Beck is doing this?' And I said: 'Well, I can probably imagine Jeff Beck is scratching his head wondering the same about you.'"

THE POWER OF THREE

"The limitations of a trio are many. But along with the word 'limitation' goes the word 'invitation'. It's inviting to see how far you can push it under such austere conditions; Clapton, Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker didn't do a bad job with Cream. When Hendrix came along his ensemble was just made to order. Their live recordings stand as testament to how groundbreaking they were as a unit. They were filling in the gaps in just the right places. ZZ Top took a cue from what I would call that spare but exquisite format."

JIMI HENDRIX

production – the burbling backwards guitar still sounds revolutionary – but the lyric is perhaps his most grounded in reality, Hendrix tracking a disintegrating family unit that younger brother Leon claimed was their own: “That is the story of our life, about my mother and father arguing, in the first verse. I’m the little Indian boy who before he was ten played war games in the woods – that’s my verse. And then the last verse is about our mother. Jimi came home and said: ‘This is our family song’.”

CROSTOWN TRAFFIC

Three tracks into *Electric Ladyland*, Hendrix dropped the album’s first jukebox moment and most accessible track. For once including all three Experience members – plus Dave Mason on backing vocals – *Crosstown Traffic*’s rocket-heeled R&B would have thrilled under any circumstances, with Hendrix splicing chords and single-note runs within the same guitar part. But the pièce de résistance was Hendrix’s joyous doubling of the hook, tooting on a comb wrapped in tissue paper for a kazoo effect.

People talk a lot about Hendrix the guitar god, and not enough about Hendrix the writer of banging pop songs. There have been entire albums released with fewer hooks than the first half of *Crosstown Traffic*. Jimi’s use of dominant-7 and minor-7 chords in this song helps to set him apart from heavy rock guitarists who were limiting themselves to power chords.

FOXY LADY

Few recorded sounds in ’67 held more anticipation than the shiver of vibrato and feedback that ignited *Foxy Lady*. The song, when it crashed in, caught the guitarist at his hardest, hookiest and most primal, the riff’s shrill payoff demanding attention every few seconds. But Hendrix rejected interpretations that the lyric was a brash ode to womanising, and it’s more likely the title referred to his times with on/off girlfriend Lithofayne Pridgon. “He used to call every pet we had Foxy,” Pridgon told *The Guardian*. “Or if I put on certain things, he’d say: ‘Wow, you look foxy in that.’”

HEY BABY (NEW RISING SUN)

Hendrix chipped away at *Hey Baby* for more than two years – christening and retitling it a number of times along the way – and you can hear the guitarist’s ever-changing moods in the shapeshifting track that finally appeared on his second posthumous album, 1971’s *Rainbow Bridge*. The intro underwhelms slightly with its dour, non-committal churn, but *Hey Baby*

finds its groove with the reggae-ish chop that enters after the first minute, before Jimi finds his voice (“Is this microphone on?”) and the song joins the canon with the propulsive lift-off of the ‘*Hey girl, I’d like to come along*’ refrain. That fourth album would have really been something.

HEY JOE

Hendrix’s arrival in London in September 1966 sent shock waves through the music community. Like some left-handed guitar-playing James Bond, women wanted to be with him, and men – especially Eric Clapton – wanted to be him.

The culmination of that summer of madness was Hendrix’s debut single. *Hey Joe* was a murder ballad, previously recorded by US folkie Tim Rose. The story of a man who shoots his ‘cheatin’ ol’ lady’ and flees to Mexico was blunter than anything by supposed bad boys The Who or the Rolling Stones.

Initially, *Hey Joe*, with its gospel-style backing vocals, potted along like a regular pop song. Then, around the 1:27 mark, Hendrix’s increasingly fervent vocals and stun-gun guitar took it somewhere new. The result was an exercise in menace and understatement; every slow-burn hard rock song of the late 60s and beyond squeezed into three-and-a-half peerless minutes.



JOE SATRIANI

WHAT DID JIMI HENDRIX MEAN TO YOU AS A PLAYER?

“Jimi’s heart and soul were evident on everything he played. This had the most profound effect on me as a young player. I still get the feeling that he surrendered himself to the music every time he performed. For Jimi, every song was a unique opportunity for expression, exploration and exposition. His skills as an improviser were spellbinding, and convinced me as a young musician that that very skill had to be part of my life’s pursuit.”

WHAT DO YOU THINK HENDRIX BROUGHT TO THE GUITAR?

“He showed us that the electric guitar could be played with far more expressiveness than previously attempted. He innovated with his fingers, hands, and his whole mind and body on every song he played.”

WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE HENDRIX MOMENT, AND WHY?

“Every time someone asks me this question I find a new answer. The problem is I love all of Jimi’s songs. For sheer groundbreaking electric guitar brilliance it has to be *Machine Gun* from the Band Of Gypsies’ *Live At The Fillmore East*.”

“But I can’t ignore the magic captured on film at the Monterey Pop Festival, when Jimi introduces the Bob Dylan song *Like A Rolling Stone*, and then proceeds to reinvent it, elevate it, and destroy it, along with his guitar! His innocence, boldness, naivety, audacity, musicianship, showmanship, are all gloriously on display in this once-in-a-lifetime moment.”



Newly Experienced:
Hendrix in Nottingham,
April 20, 1967

INTERVIEW: JASON SIMPTEL

PHOTO FROM JIMI BY ANNE HENDRIX AND DONALD DENNOTT. PUBLISHED BY CHRONICLE BOOKS. TONY GALE © AUTHENTIC HENDRIX, LLC

IF SIX WAS NINE

Later included on the *Easy Rider* film soundtrack, this psychedelic blues was the 60s counterculture in excelsis, from Hendrix's pot shots at 'white collar conservatives flashing down the street' to the likely influence of LSD ("I didn't find out until after we finished *Axis* that he'd been taking acid," confessed producer-manager Chas Chandler). A cameo from Graham Nash stomping his feet on the track bled into a free-form outro, with Hendrix tooting on a borrowed recorder. "So here's Jimi freaking out," engineer Eddie Kramer recalled, "and of course I stick a lot of echo on. And the guys are stomping away like mad. It sounds like galloping horses!"

The elaborate production was almost in vain, after Hendrix left the *Axis* master tape in a taxi. Redding saved the day by supplying an early mix on an arse-rough open-reel tape, and the bassist also took credit for the outro: "When we all go into three separate time signatures, that's basically an idea of mine, because we didn't know what to do at that one point in the song."

LITTLE WING

Eddie Kramer: "Little Wing has all of the essence of the great man in that one song. It's sensitive. It has beautiful dynamics. It has Jimi playing a glockenspiel, which he'd never played before. There was a huge table of instruments left over from a previous session, and literally in a couple of minutes he had it down, and all those beautiful bell sounds are him. Even though the amp was full up, the front part of the song is very quiet, because of his technique of using the volume control on his Strat. So when the solo comes in, it just soars. It's a piece of art."

If the languid guitar flourish that opens *Little Wing* sounded like it was rolling impulsively off Hendrix's fingers, in truth the musical roots were a little more tangled. In '66, channelling the rhythm playing of one-time tour-mate Curtis Mayfield, the journeyman guitarist had thrown similar shapes on (*My Girl*) *She's A Fox* during a spell with R&B duo The Icemen. That same year, after-hours loiterers on New York's Greenwich Village circuit might have heard those glistening trills resurface as Hendrix tinkered with the guitar part, honing the piano-style voicings that were possible only because his long thumb was able to reach over the neck to fret the low bass notes.

Post-fame, the lyric came faster, in a flash of inspiration at Monterey, as Hendrix imagined the festival's love-your-brother vibe personified into an 'angel came down from heaven' ("I figured that I take everything around," he reflected, "and put it maybe in the form of a girl"). ➤

ALEX SOICA



MICK FLEETWOOD

DISCOVERING HENDRIX

"There was this strange sort of rumour that had started in London. 'Something is coming.' 'Have you heard about him?' 'He's like nothing on earth'. 'I can't explain what's gonna hit you'. Then we were all told about the show at the Bag O'Nails. Everyone tried to make it back from their various gigs, and if they weren't playing they were all down that club. I was there with Peter [Green], Eric [Clapton] was there, Pete Townshend, Jeff Beck. Next thing we know, this mysterious rumoured entity, known as the Jimi Hendrix Experience, jumped on to this tiny little stage, which was completely consumed with two stacks of Marshalls and Mitch's drum kit in the middle. All you can say is that everyone in that audience – especially guitar players – was sitting or standing with their mouths wide open."

PERSONAL MEMORIES

"I think maybe even before that Bag O'Nails gig, Fleetwood Mac was rehearsing in a basement off Oxford Street. Unannounced, [early Mac producer] Mike Vernon came down and he had obviously hooked up with this young man known as Jimi Hendrix. And with all deference to the rest of the boys in Fleetwood Mac, including me, he was there to see and hear Peter.

"He was the sweetest, shyest creature. But you could tell there was a sense of mystery and mischief. He reminded me of Brian Jones – really shy and yet... not. Brian didn't get a lot of credit. Jimi did. But they were both a very similar vibration.

"He didn't play guitar that day. But you knew instinctively there was a presence in the room. And he just sat and hung and spoke a little bit here and there, then drifted off. And we had just met Jimi.

"There were other instances. Later on, in New York, we were playing at Steve Paul's Scene club and Jimi came down, got up and jammed. I was being a bit of a worry wart. I remember hearing: 'We don't have a left-handed guitar.' And, idiot that I was, I'm going: 'What are we going to do?' And I remember Jimi saying: 'That doesn't matter.' And he proceeded to pick up one of Peter's spare guitars and play it the wrong way round.

"It was so extraordinary, the complete command of his instrument. You go: 'Well, how do you make a guitar do that? How's he making this shit happen?'

And in the end it's the touch. Jimi could literally pick up a guitar and play it upside-down with all the strings round the wrong way. He was part of the guitar. When you witnessed Jimi play, it was a total implosion of soul, body, music, touch, and the guitar just happened to be a tool in the middle of all that. Seeing that in motion was literally like poetry."

WHAT HE MEANT TO ME

"One thing we learnt as young blues musicians is that if you're a support player – which a rhythm section is – it's important to catch the moment. The guys in the front are doing their shit, and you're setting the stage, so you're constantly listening and watching like a hawk. If you look at the Experience on stage, I just love the way that, like a teacher, Jimi conducted everything. Not only with his playing, but with body language and sign language, so Mitch and Noel could stay with him. He was a very kind player. He could fly into the stratosphere, but he would take the other players there with him. I always thought that was something I learnt from Peter as a player, and hopefully somewhat as a person. I get reminded of that [by Hendrix]. So that would be the lesson learnt. The kindness of the way he played, with everyone."

JIMI'S LEGACY

"How do I feel now when I see a T-shirt or poster with Jimi Hendrix on it? Well, the Irish sentimentality from my father's side of the family means I would go: 'What a crying shame.' The very sad loss of someone so talented... You felt duped that someone like that had left. That Jimi hadn't completed what you knew he should have. He was twenty-seven. What is it about that number? Jim Morrison. Janis Joplin. Kurt Cobain. There's about eight or more who all left when they were twenty-seven. And they were all meteorite-type talents in their various ways.

"I think you have to end up celebrating Jimi's music, and there's a lot of it that he left behind. Without any shadow of a doubt, he would still have been an extraordinary player. I think he'd have remained incredibly inventive. He was such an alchemist. I can't believe he wouldn't have been enthralled, even at eighty years old. I would say, one hundred per cent, our man, had he remained with us, would have been beautifully active and developed all sorts of gifts to hand down to us to enjoy."



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The Jimi Hendrix Experience at the cover shoot for debut album *Are You Experienced*, London, spring 1967: (l-r) bassist Noel Redding, Hendrix, drummer Mitch Mitchell.



JOE BONAMASSA

HENDRIX AS A PLAYER?

"Jimi Hendrix meant the world to generations. He was the total package: player, showman and writer. As innovative and revolutionary as his playing was, it's the songs that stand the test of time. Great guitar playing needs a vehicle for it to do that. Jimi has great songs, period."

WHAT HE BROUGHT TO THE GUITAR?

"Jimi brought fire... He used his guitar as a weapon. Up until that point only Buddy Guy had weaponised the electric guitar. It was visceral and almost terrifying to listen to and watch as a young kid in his formative years. Beautiful tone, phrasing and use of chords. Game changer."

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE HENDRIX MOMENT, AND WHY?

"Jimi at Monterey. Black 1965 Fender Strat, a Marshall stack and a black-face Fender Showman amp, covering Bob Dylan's *Like A Rolling Stone*. A life-changing moment for those lucky enough to witness it in person, and life changing for me."

INTERVIEW: JASON SIDWELL

Even then, *Little Wing* could have turned out very differently. In an October 1967 session at Olympic, following on the heels of the hot-headed *Wait Until Tomorrow*, early passes were more rocking, but patently not the right treatment. Hendrix reconsidered, slowed the pace, and *Little Wing* became an ethereal masterpiece, decorated with a glockenspiel and a DIY Leslie speaker. "The 'Leslie' was a tiny, handmade thing," said Eddie Kramer, "with a little Meccano set to support it and a rubber band driving a motor."

The track is defined by the cascading guitar work, which covers by Stevie Ray Vaughan and Eric Clapton valiantly chased but never quite caught.

Of the Experience's three original albums, *Axis: Bold As Love* might be home to Hendrix's deeper cuts, but *Little Wing* remains a calling card.

MACHINE GUN

Kirk Hammett: "The version of *Machine Gun* on *Band Of Gypsies* is so atmospheric,

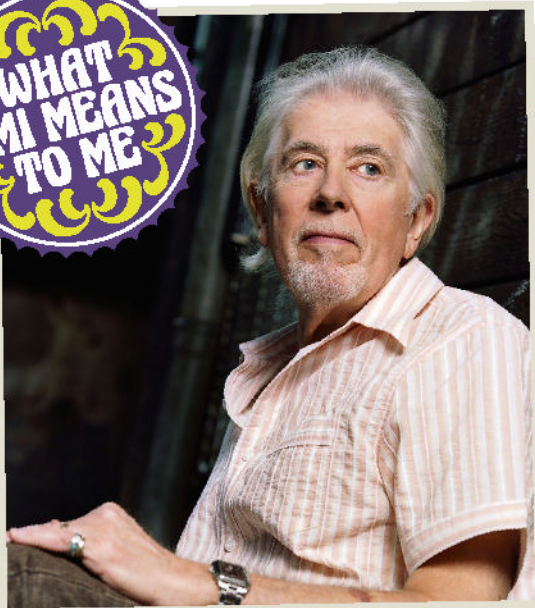
it's so moody, it's so stoner-rock – even before stoner-rock existed – and virtuosic at the same time. He really brings you there, to the killing fields, and every time I hear that, the impending sense of doom he creates just blows me away. It's like Black Sabbath... if Black Sabbath was played by a bunch of very talented musicians from some other realm or galaxy."

Historically an opaque lyricist, Hendrix left no doubt about the inspiration behind the Band Of Gypsies' high-water mark, dedicating it on stage at the mighty 1970 Fillmore East show to the soldiers in Vietnam (and those braving riots on home soil). Scuttling on muted strings and squalling over Buddy Miles's rat-a-tat drumming, *Machine Gun* was the most visceral of protest songs, catching the dread of war.

Joe Satriani: "Jimi's greatest song, without a doubt, is *Machine Gun* from the *Band Of Gypsies* live album, recorded at Fillmore East in 1969/70. Let's just start from the top: it was improvised in front of an audience by a trio, and he's playing a Fender Stratocaster, a couple of pedals and three Marshall half-stacks. Anyone that's ever done a live album like that will know how you get butterflies in your stomach and sweaty hands just thinking about the anxiety of recording a live album that way. These days, everyone has a massive pedalboard and they know they can record it six times, plus options to overdub, retune or retighten it later. We're talkin' reality here..."

"Then you have to think about the time it happened – there was all this political and social upheaval in the US and around the world. Then, an African American famous for playing with two British guys shows up with two other African Americans as a brand new band. They played a set that was so mind-blowing, and then came out with one song that rewrote electric guitar for everybody from that moment on. It was like him saying: 'This is the way you're going to do it from now on...' This is the way it's going to be! But he wasn't thinking that, it was innocent Jimi trying to make some beautiful music and a political point. He was twenty-seven years old and trying to do something unique."

"In that moment, he showed us how you can play rhythm, riff and melody at the same time, blending with a band and how to tie all these motifs together. Using the whammy bar to connect one section to another, playing around with major and minor in a third-generation electric blues context. Even if you forget about the wah-wah, Uni-Vibe and Octavia, what he did was ground-breaking. When I think about it now, I still can't believe it – almost like trying to fathom the people who built the pyramids or first railroad or the Wright brothers getting in the plane for the first time." ➤



JOHN MAYALL

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

"I first heard about Jimi in 1966 from Chas Chandler, who had left The Animals and was now in a managerial position with Mike Jeffreys. Chas had been telling everyone about this amazing guitarist he'd seen in New York. He told me he was so good that he was going to bring him to England and make a star of him.

"The show on November 25 at the Bag O'Nails club was more than a revelation. I was just glad that I wasn't a lead guitarist, because all the hotshots – Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, Jeff Beck, Pete Townshend and so on – were in a state of shock. The world now knows what Jimi sounds like, so you can only imagine what it was like to hear a guitarist of that intensity and originality for the first time.

"He did a few of the London clubs, and once the buzz got around, the top rock guitarists had to rethink their positions in the hierarchy. Jimi genuinely changed the course of rock'n'roll."

LOST RECORDING

"I'd bought a reel-to-reel tape recorder with a view to documenting all our gigs, and recorded over sixty hours of tape. These recordings included a slow blues recorded one night at the Speakeasy when Jimi came on stage and took over Mick Taylor's guitar. Unfortunately, only a brief moment was recorded, as we weren't allowed to acknowledge Jimi's performance for contractual reasons. It's tantalising to hear him play with the volume turned down to almost nothing."

OTHER SHOWS

"We played two shows on a bill with Jimi, Albert King and Soft Machine at the Winterland Ballroom in Los Angeles in February 1968. That whole hippie scene was an eye-opener for me. Flowers and good vibes abounded everywhere. The promoter Bill Graham was leading the way in putting Jimi on the map, and it was very impressive to see the way in which he had made his mark in America, just as he'd done in England.

"We played on a bill with him again at a very different show in Zurich, Switzerland in May 1968. It was in a huge, cycle-racing stadium. There were chairs being broken and fights and scuffles with the police going on while bands including Traffic and The Move were playing. Jimi was the big, headlining star of the show. He really was most impressive.

"Those were such exciting times going on back then. We were all in the same boat, but Jimi was just about the most exciting thing there was."



Royal performance:
Hendrix at the Albert Hall,
London, February 1969.

MANIC DEPRESSION

Robby Krieger: "Murray the K was a big DJ in New York at the time, and we [The Doors] were doing a video with him for *People Are Strange*, which was going to come out as a single. And he had took me up to his studio and said: 'Hey, I want you to hear something! There's this new guy, Jimi Hendrix, from London,' and he played me a couple of songs from the first album. It turned out my favourite one was *Manic Depression*.

"I played on a number of these Jimi Hendrix tours with Experience Hendrix, with all these guitar players together, and that was the one I liked to play. It's got that three-quarter time. It's different. That's why I like it, just the way Jimi came up with those lines."

After Chas Chandler criticised Hendrix's interview manner as "manic depressive", the guitarist had his title, even if the lyric seemed more to do with thwarted love than with mental health – 'I wish I could caress and kiss, kiss...' With Mitchell's muscular jazz rolls high in the mix, Hendrix's riff climbing upward through the verses, and his vocal flowing across the 3/4 meter, *Manic Depression* seemed to have no centre of gravity – and was all the better for it. That seasick vibe probably prevented the track's promotion to being a single release from *Are You Experienced*, but Hollywood Vampires' 2015 cover was a reminder that the hard-core were listening.

PURPLE HAZE

Steve Hackett: I think *Purple Haze* is my favourite Hendrix song. It's a very cleverly written tune, and is full of unexpected twists. It defines the term 'psychedelic'. Both the angular guitar riff and the opening dissonant chords give you that feeling of Iron Man Cometh. But there's vulnerability too in the lyric, with the idea of confusion running through it. Although *Purple Haze* is a short song, Hendrix often played it live with extended moments which sometimes literally did 'kiss the sky', to quote the lyric.

"His impact on music was huge. A man who didn't need a light show. For me it was just enough to watch the alchemy of his fingers, his dexterity and the way he danced with his instrument."

Hendrix had complained that the Experience's debut single *Hey Joe* "wasn't us" (literally: it was a cover). Follow-up *Purple Haze* corrected that, with a brain-dump of Hendrix's myriad interests, from sci-fi to sex, and possibly psychedelics (he variously explained the inspiration as a dream of walking on the sea bed, and the "daze" of chasing an unattainable woman).

That first draft, the guitarist reflected, had sprawled to "a thousand words... I had it all written out". But Chas Chandler, eyeing radio, helped prune *Purple Haze* back to a more palatable three minutes – without sacrificing a lick of what (arguably) nudges *Voodoo Child* as Jimi's signature guitar moment. The opening two-note jolt (an unsettling tri-tone

HENDRIXOLOGY

Illuminating the musical mechanics of a guitar master.

Words: **Milton Mermikides**

Jimi Hendrix is rightfully acclaimed as one of the most inventive, influential and creative electric guitarists in history. In his tragically short career he greatly expanded the possibilities of the instrument and left an indelible print on how the guitar – and its technologies – is played to this day.

However, despite this almost mythological aura around his playing, there is relatively little deep analysis of his musical mechanics. Which is a wasted opportunity, as he is a supremely interesting guitarist in terms of harmony, fretboard strategies, articulation, timbre and rhythm. He was also deeply interested in all types of music. He adored and drew influence from blues, funk, folk, Western classical music, jazz, Indian classical music and soul, as well as his contemporaries in the rock sphere.

Ironically Hendrix's other-worldliness came from embracing, without prejudice, the music of the world. He was also diffident and humble about compliments on his musicianship, and thirsty for musical knowledge, taking lessons on harmony from Miles Davis – he is quoted as saying in an interview that he wanted to take a break from his career to attend music school, learn to read music, and "study and think".

In the spirit of this endless curiosity, I've taken three iconic Hendrix tracks (one from each of his three studio albums *Are You Experienced*, *Axis: Bold As Love* and *Electric Ladyland* respectively) to have a look at, and illuminated some of his brilliant guitaristic and musical ideas, using some contemporary analytical approaches.

PURPLE HAZE

This track is a great example of Jimi's sophisticated and inventive use of harmony and dissonance. To appreciate this there are some fundamental concepts to understand about harmony.

1. Tonality. There is a 'centre of gravity' in pitches and chords, some more unstable than others and there is one – the tonic note (and the tonic or 'I' chord) – that feels most like 'home' around which the other notes and chords circulate.
2. In tonal music, keys are typically either clearly in major (which includes a major third) or minor (which includes a minor third).
3. Intervals – the relationship between notes – are variously consonant (think 'settled' or 'smooth') and dissonant (think 'scrunchy'). Dissonance tends to occur away and leading to the tonic chord, where there is typically more consonance.

Purple Haze twists and subverts these norms in several ways. It is clearly tonal – in the key of E – but that tonic note is given a constant delicious dissonance. The introduction plays repeated Es against Bbs. E and Bb create a tritone interval. The tritone can be a particularly dissonant interval. Despite the common myth, it wasn't ever banned from music making, and here Jimi embraces the dissonance repeatedly and directly.

Jimi's love of dissonance is also clear in his use of the 'Hendrix chord'. This chord (in this case E G# D and G) is often shorthand as a 7#9 (dominant 7 sharp 9) and is extraordinarily rich despite just having four notes. It contains the two spiciest intervals: a tritone between G# and D, and a semitone clash between G and G#. It also contains both a major and minor third. Jimi repeatedly uses this chord as the tonic 'home' chord, and so there is a bittersweet angular flavour to the entire track. This major-minor ambiguity is also evident; it intermingles chords (and scales) from the key of E minor and E major.

LITTLE WING

While guitar duties are often separated into 'lead' and 'rhythm' roles, Jimi was a master and innovator in the 'chord-melody' approach, where both are effectively performed simultaneously.

Inspired by the playing of soul and jazz guitarists like Curtis Mayfield and Wes Montgomery, Jimi developed this approach into a beautiful signature style. While he used this in some form on every one of his recordings, *Little Wing* (see also *The Wind Cries Mary*, *Castles Made Of Sand*, *Wait Until Tomorrow*, *Bold As Love* and the sublime *Angel*) is a celebrated example.

Jimi's chord melody style relies on two skills: the ability to play any chord (major, minor or dominant 7) not as a single fixed-position object, but in any position on the fretboard; and the ability to embellish these forms with small (two to three-note) chordal elaborations. *Little Wing* is a beautiful progression of major and minor chords, and these skills allow them to be treated with a harmonic fluidity, providing both harmonic support to the vocals and lead guitar but with an engaging melodic improvisational freedom.

Figure 2 (below) compares the concept of 'G' from the perspective of a normative 'strummer' to Jimi's sophisticated and expressive all-fretboard vision (for the benefit of most readers this has been presented for right-handed players). Jimi would play these chords with melodic and harmonic colourations (usually 9ths, 6ths and 4ths) as 'extensions' to the chord, or used with slurs and slides for melodies in two- and three-note mini-chords and to connect up positions. Of course, he could transpose this to play over any root of the major chord, and had similarly elegant structures for minor chords and blues contexts.

Also embedded in *Little Wing* (and missing from most transcriptions and performances) is Jimi's mastery of rhythmic swing.

VOODOO CHILD (SLIGHT RETURN)

In most music theory an emphasis is placed on pitch (scale, melody and harmony) and rhythm (meter, syncopation, phrasing). And in *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)* there is much to say about the use of major-minor ambiguity, the 'Hendrix chord', micro-tonal bends, call and response, and a light semiquaver swing feel. However, an overlooked form of musical expression is timbre – i.e. the tonal quality of a sound. While guitarists can be obsessed with tone, it is often equated to 'having a pleasing sound'; an attractive 'serving plate' for the melodic 'food'. Jimi, however, shows that timbre can be used as a distinct and central form of musical expression, whatever the pitches used. While timbre is multi-dimensional and endlessly complex, even a simple consideration can be very useful, and reveal patterns in Jimi's playing.

Let's look at resonance, which we will define here as the amount of high frequency versus low frequency content – it's the quality of brightness versus mellowness in a sound. Jimi manipulated this extensively by plectrum attack, playing muted strings (on their own or together with played notes). He combined such techniques with the use of his pickup selector switch (with five varying timbres from mellow to bright), fuzz pedal and of course wah-wah pedal, which provides a continuous foot-controlled level of resonance.

Voodoo Child uses an inventive combination of playing approaches and technological manipulation. Jimi would also leave a characteristic resonance in place (for example, by pushing the wah-wah pedal to its brightest level and leaving it there) to colour an entire section. An illustration of some of his strategies with the wah-wah pedal are shown in Figure 3 (below). Such techniques – in combination with Jimi's fretboard knowledge, rhythmic feel and harmonic invention – go some way to revealing his enduring influence and legacy.

Fig 1
The 'Hendrix' Chord
as used in *Purple Haze*

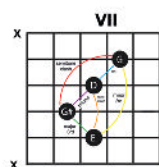


Fig 2
G Chord Variations

Common G Major Chords

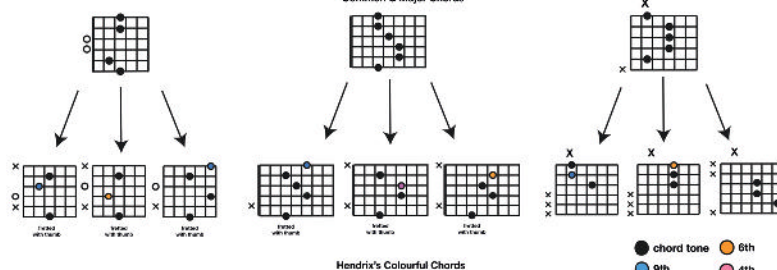
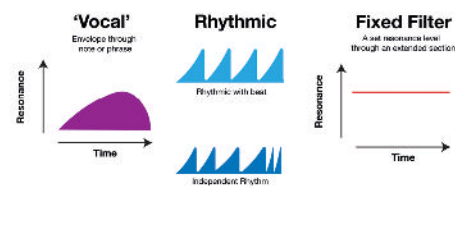


Fig 3
Jimi's Wah-Wah Strategies



interval rightly nicknamed 'the devil in music') and three-chord verse might have been a basic canvas, but with his frighteningly adept lead – taken to the stars by revolutionary use of Roger Mayer's Octavia pedal – Hendrix announced himself beyond question as the virtuoso and sonic adventurer to beat.

If you Google 'the new Hendrix', the top result refers to Gary Clark Jr., and the Austin bluesman is quick to recognise the influence: "When I heard *Purple Haze*, I knew that was my thing".

Steve Harley: "I was with Jimi all the way through his career, right from the beginning, including being at the Isle of Wight Festival in 1970, which was his second-to-last live performance. He was bitterly disappointing that day, he'd fallen asleep backstage and they [the Band Of Gypsies] went on very late and played a set of slow blues. That's not the way I'd like to remember him.

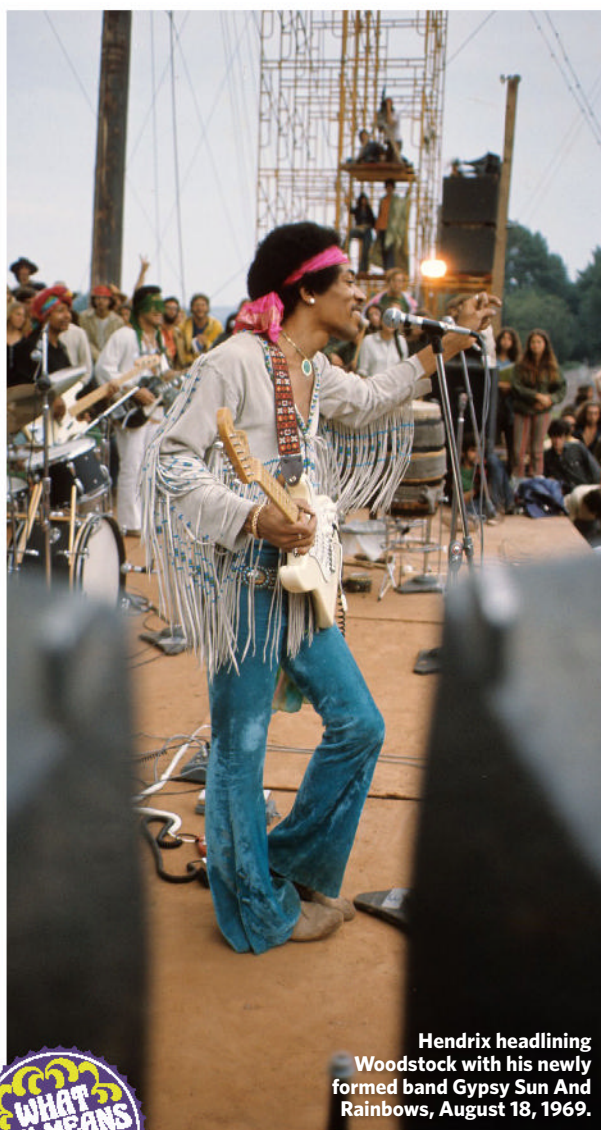
"As a performer, Hendrix was mesmerising, an ex-American squaddie, he came from another place entirely. There are not many of those artists... I think of Bob Dylan, McCartney and Lennon together, Paul Simon, Neil Young to a degree and Joni [Mitchell], they all came from that special place. The creativity of the names I just mentioned is hard to quantify. And Jimi was undoubtedly one of those. If you put a gun to my head and asked me to choose a single song of his, I'll say *Purple Haze*. It's an obvious choice, but no apologies."

RED HOUSE

At first glance, *Red House* hardly squared with Jimi's iconoclast reputation. Three tracks into *Are You Experienced*, it set out its stall as a no-frills slow blues, following 12-bar dogma at trudging pace, skirting plagiarism of Albert King's *Travelin' To California*. But at the two-minute mark – "That's alright, I still got my guitar, look out now!" – Hendrix elevated the track with a solo of such unadorned beauty that it equalled anything in his bag of tricks. It was so good, noted John Lee Hooker, that it would make you "grab your mother and choke her".

"The beauty of Jimi," says Lamb Of God's Mark Morton, "is that he was so strongly rooted in the blues but he had a very innovative approach to playing the guitar." It is impossible to imagine the modern electric blues scene without Hendrix. But this song's influence is not limited to that – it's been covered by Imagine Dragons and Prince.

Eddie Kramer: "Something happened to Jimi's songs when he played them live. For me, there's a couple of standouts on the new live album [*Los Angeles Forum*, April 26, 1969]. Just putting up the faders and listening to the performance – wow. For me, that show has one of the best Red



Hendrix headlining Woodstock with his newly formed band Gypsy Sun And Rainbows, August 18, 1969.



STEVE LUKATHER

WHAT DID JIMI HENDRIX MEAN TO YOU AS A PLAYER?

"It was the aftershock of The Beatles changing the world, then an alien landed on our planet to give, those that understood, the truth. All that before he was twenty-seven years old."

WHAT DO YOU THINK HENDRIX BROUGHT TO THE GUITAR?

"A total reinvention of the possibilities. He could make a statement with his use of feedback, and amazing use of chords and R&B stylings which he made his own. Very loudly! It's like nothing else. I'm not sure anyone could make an impact like that afterwards. EVH did but he was not on a cultural level, because Jimi was part of the sixties anti-establishment scene. Black man with a white band, accepted by everyone. But I never saw colour, just the sound. It was a colossal sound; the anger and intensity of *Machine Gun* through to the softness of *The Wind Cries Mary*. Goodness knows what he could have gone on to have done."

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE HENDRIX MOMENT, AND WHY?

Impossible. They are all a huge part of my growing up. Kids today might not 'get it', but remember this was 1966! Nothing like it had happened before, or indeed after it."

Houses I've ever heard. The dynamics, the exploration, the wah-wah, the way it goes so soft you can hear conversation in the audience. It's breathtaking."

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

On the morning of August 18, 1969, Jimi played Woodstock with his short-lived ensemble Gypsy Sun And Rainbows. Towards the end of the set, he dropped in an overdriven, distorted and generally fucked-up version of the hallowed US national anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner*. Conservatives and patriots instantly claimed it was wholly inappropriate and offensive, and caused them to wretch into their own hands, while others believed it to be a noisy statement against the Vietnam War. So what's the answer? Well, it's said that by the time Hendrix took to the stage that morning he'd been awake for three consecutive days. So the answer is anyone's guess, really.

Greta Van Fleet guitarist Jim Kiszka had his life changed after learning this tune in school: "I remember tearing up because it was so emotional, so for the next three years I was obsessed with Hendrix – meticulously trying to figure out what he was doing."

STONE FREE

Glenn Hughes: "Back in the mid-1960s I was a guitarist before I took up the bass, and my two main sources of inspiration were Hendrix and Cream. I was more in the Jimi camp because his swagger and groove captured me.

"The track that encapsulated my appreciation of Jimi was *Stone Free*. I used to play it when I was very young and in a tribute band. Its distinctive groove and swagger became a blueprint for my own songwriting. Those two qualities are very important for me. People tend to forget what a great vocalist he was too – I still find it hard to believe he felt he couldn't sing. Back then there was nobody emulating Jimi, nobody even came close. What he did was so pure, it might have come from another dimension."

THE WIND CRIES MARY

The gossamer lilt of the Experience's third single, according to Hendrix's then-girlfriend Kathy Etchingham (middle name Mary), was at odds with its volatile inspiration, a repentant Hendrix writing it by way of apology after a blow-up over mashed potatoes: "He tastes them with a fork and says they're all lumpy. That's how the argument started."

The January '67 session at London's De

Lane Lea studios moved fast, remembered Jimi's manager/producer Chas Chandler – just 20 minutes to play through with Mitchell and Redding, plus overdubs, but you'd never guess it. While London shook with blues scales, Hendrix's jazzy three-chord shift at the end of the chorus sounded impossibly sophisticated.

VOODOO CHILD (SLIGHT RETURN)

Bruce Dickinson: "My favourite all-time song of Jimi's would have to be *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)*. Because it's fantastic, and also because it was the first time I'd heard an electric guitar made to sound like that. I first heard it at school, on vinyl on a record player in the sixth-form common room with a load of mates. It was very important moment in my life."

The wah-wah guitar pedal was a relatively new invention when Hendrix used it to devastating effect on the unforgettable introduction of *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)*. And while that intro is the track's most memorable feature, Hendrix treats the entire composition as a vehicle for expression. He alternates between rhythm and lead playing in the blink of an eye, and both riffs and solos frequently pan from left to right to add to the swaying, hypnotic nature of the performance. His guitar parts are backed up by the solid, unwavering playing of bassist Noel Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell, who allow him the breathing space he needs in order to take the dynamics down and up.

Released in a format somewhere between a single and an EP, *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)* was backed with *Hey Joe* and Hendrix's immortal cover of Bob Dylan's *All Along The Watchtower*. *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)* remains another reason for Hendrix's reputation as a man for whom a guitar was not simply an instrument. As his devotees believe, his iconic Fender Stratocaster was a vehicle for the expression of his essential soul.

Kenny Wayne Shepherd: "My favourite guitar song of all-time – the biggest guitar anthem ever written – is *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)*. When I put my own band together at the age of sixteen, that would always be the last song of show."

"There's that bend on the second fret of the G string, and he'd flip through the different pickup positions... It just sounds like someone dropping bombs, and planes flying by. It's so crazy! And that's a sound he created. Supposedly he was trying to actually recreate the sounds he heard jumping out of planes when he was in the air force. It's such a powerful way of bending and making his instrument sound otherworldly." ➤



EDDIE KRAMER

DISCOVERING HENDRIX

"We all know the story: Chas brings him to London, they search for musicians, and it's Mitch and Noel. Then they go to Paris and do their first gigs there, and it's brilliant, of course. And we'd look at *Melody Maker* or *NME*, and we'd hear about this new guy. You'd hear the rumours through the industry: 'You gotta hear him.' The stories were legion. This guy turned the whole guitar playing world on its ear."

PERSONAL MEMORIES

"Olympic Studios had moved to Hammersmith, and in late-January of 1967, I got the call from front desk. Anna Menzies, who ran the studio, said: 'Eddie, there's this American chappy with the big hair. You do all that weird shit anyway, so why don't you do him?' So that's how I got to do Hendrix."

"I remember seeing him walk into the studio, sit in the corner, huddled up in a raincoat. Didn't say a bloody word. I'm running around like a blue-arsed fly trying to set up the amps. Jimi gets up and takes his coat off, puts on the guitar, plugs in. I must be standing maybe six feet away. He hits a chord, and it's a sound that I'll never forget. Imprinted on my brain cells. It hit you like an asteroid."

"The first memory I go to with James Marshall Hendrix is his sense of humour. He was one of the funniest human beings on earth. If things were going downhill in the studio, he'd flip to playing the Batman theme or a showtune. And the band would jump on it right away. He would hit a chord and he would be serious, and then he'd give that sly [wink]. He knew he was winding you up. One of these days I'd like to put together all the out-takes. We were serious about the music, but we were laughing all the time."

"Watching Hendrix work, you could almost sense the neurons moving at a million miles an hour, from the brain all the way through his body, through his hands and fingers, right up to the guitar at the end."

We would set up three big screens in the studio because nobody could see him sing. He couldn't stand the sound of his voice. He hated it. So we'd turn all the lights down and he'd poke his head around the screens and ask: 'Was that alright?' I'd say: 'Yeah, it's great, Jimi.' And he'd say: 'I'm going to do it again.' Same thing with guitar solos. They would just pour out of him and they were bloody marvellous... And then he would do them again!

"I was there when Jimi played the Saville Theatre in June 1967. He knew The Beatles were going to be in the audience, and he'd got an advance copy of *Sgt. Pepper's*. I remember going up the back stairs to see Jimi and the boys. He was sitting in the corner and he's got this tiny little Philips record player. He's playing the opening song of *Sgt. Pepper's*, he's got the guitar in his hand and he's looking at the guys saying: 'It goes like this.' They rehearsed it for about five minutes. Then they run downstairs, jump on stage and open with that song. Everybody in the audience is flabbergasted."

MY FAVOURITE HENDRIX DEEP CUT

"I liked some of the later stuff, like *Dolly Dagger*. I remember how much his girlfriend [Devon Wilson] was part of that song, and I'd never seen her in the control room so many times. And she was very sweet. A troubled human, unfortunately. And Jimi wrote this about her drug addiction. So there was the fun side and the dark side."

AS AN INSPIRATION/WHAT HENDRIX MEANT TO ME

"Jimi absolutely left his mark on me. I think one of the most important things I learnt through working with Jimi was to capture a live performance in the studio and help the musicians feel like they're creating something live, not computerised. There was this whole concept of going into a room, figuring out a song – and maybe they had rehearsed it up to a point – then they'd nail it within a couple of hours. I mean, we would get a couple of songs a night. Today, this whole idea of perfection drives me nuts. I think Jimi would have hated most aspects of modern recording technology."

JIMI'S LEGACY

"You had no idea that you were recording history in the moment. You knew the guy was a genius, and you just happened to be there and part of the creative process. [That he died so young], that's the unfortunate part of the history. But the fact that he was with us for those four years and created all that wonderful music... and it still lives. It's a living, breathing thing."

"Jimi could have become an elder statesman, with maybe his own film company, his own publishing company, still making music, working with young artists. He would have embraced rap and hip-hop – all that would have become a little part of what he created, because he absorbed music like a sponge. If you listen to the albums, from *Are You Experienced*, to *Axis*, to *Electric Ladyland*, they're on a steep curve, and you can hear the music shift and change. And what about *Band Of Gypsies*? That was a radical departure – but what a great one. I can imagine him as an eighty-year-old."



Hendrix at the Newport Pop Festival, Northridge, California, June 22, 1969.

ED CARNEY / ICONIC IMAGES



STEVE HACKETT

WHAT DID JIMI MEAN TO YOU AS A PLAYER?

"Initially I thought he came across with a rare animal power. But when you look more closely, his lyrics are full of poetry. Sometimes the words are very dark, with lots of references to imminent death and allusions to the next world. His showmanship seemed to come naturally to him. No one ever moved as gracefully with the guitar in hand. I feel it was his fluidity, as well as his innovation and risk-taking, that impressed and influenced me. His playing was heady stuff for me as an aspiring teenage rocker."

WHAT DO YOU THINK HENDRIX BROUGHT TO THE GUITAR?

"Hendrix was a bluesman with a very big difference. I knew his guitar tech, Eric Barrett, who said that Jimi played through feedback constantly, like a weapon permanently set on stun. The spacecraft aspect of his playing was hugely inspiring. He was always going to take you on a trip to some uncharted part of the universe. His playing skirts the limits of earthly experience. It's virtually a shamanic inner journey. He also brought many production ideas to the guitar. Somehow you feel that at Woodstock he was trying to register his protest at the falling bombs on Vietnam, managing to say as much with his guitar as other protest songs had done with words."

VOODOO CHILE

It would never be as celebrated as its (almost) same-named offshoot, but amid the wild experimentation of *Electric Ladyland*, *Voodoo Chile* was a reminder that few could touch Hendrix on a route-one blues. Nodding hard to Muddy Waters's *Rollin' Blues* and *Hoochie Coochie Man* – with a stir of sci-fi to boot – the structure was secondary to the vibe, with Hendrix corralling Hammond player Steve Winwood and bassist Jack Casady for a free-form 15-minute take that remains one of the quintessential wee-small-hours 60s studio jams. "There were no chord sheets, no nothing," Winwood recalled. "He just started playing."

WILD THING

Mick Fleetwood: "I loved the cheekiness when Jimi did *Wild Thing*. And the reason I have a soft spot for that song is that it meant that he wasn't a snob. I always loved The Troggs. I used to tell everyone: 'No, they're really good.' But there was a little snobby thing in the musical circles that we might have been in, like: 'What are you talking about?' So when Hendrix did *Wild Thing*, I was going: 'See, I told you so.'"

1983... (A MERMAN I SHOULD TURN TO BE)

By spring 1968, *Electric Ladyland* had suffered its first casualty, with Chas Chandler quitting over Hendrix's obsessive attention to detail and habit of inviting the flotsam of the New York club scene back to the studio. With the brakes off, 1983... (*A Merman I Should Turn To Be*) Hendrix dived deeper on a 13-minute psychedelic epic that sprawls between the backwards flute of Traffic's Chris Wood, seagull squawks created with microphone feedback, and amphibious lyrics that spoke of escaping the 'fighting nest' and 'screaming pain' of dry land.

It was hard to disagree with producer Eddie Kramer's assessment that "when Chas left, we were off to the races". According to Kramer, Jimi could record backwards guitar with an uncanny ability to know how it would sound, a skill strongly in evidence here. 🎧

The Jimi Hendrix Experience Los Angeles Forum: April 26, 1969 album is released on November 18 on 2LP vinyl, CD and all digital platforms. Images in this feature taken from FIMI by Janie Hendrix and John McDermott (Chronicle Chroma, £40), out November 24.

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Fortunate SONS

For a time in the late 60s, **Creedence Clearwater Revival** were the hottest band in America, if not the world. Former members recall their rocket ride from outcasts to “outselling The Beatles”.

Words: **Rob Hughes** Additional reporting: **Ken Sharp**

Creedence Clearwater Revival were about to enter a storm. Seventy-two hours after touching down in London in April 1970, ahead of their first European tour, their press conference was overshadowed by shock news of The Beatles' split. Reporters, TV crews and distressed fans were gathering in numbers outside Beatles label Apple's offices on Savile Row; newspapers scurried to prepare competing headlines.

The next day's NME carried an oddly prophetic interview with CCR leader John Fogerty, conducted en route to customs inspection at Heathrow airport. He explained that his band were now experiencing what The Beatles had gone through a thousand-fold, their records selling in huge quantities worldwide. “Of course,” he added, “we can never ever hope to emulate the impact made by The Beatles. Nobody can.”

His modesty was understandable. But it transpired that Fogerty was somewhat underplaying the CCR effect. In a little over a year, they had scored half a dozen Top 10 singles and three platinum-selling albums in their native US – a run that was about to eclipse the Fabs in terms of sales. CCR were fast becoming the biggest band on the planet.

On the night of April 14, 1970, they set out to prove it. Four days on from the Beatles news, CCR played the first of two sell-out shows at London's Royal Albert Hall. It was an unmitigated triumph, the band powering through a set with explosive force, twisting the basic tenets of rock'n'roll into their own distinct brand of Californian voodoo.

“Right around that time we really started to come into our own,” Fogerty reflects today. “You start to hear that confidence and swagger in the

way we perform. That performance was pretty doggone good, pretty solid and strong and full of energy. I was a kid from El Cerrito and, as of two years before that, had never been anywhere. Suddenly I'm touring the States for a year and then experiencing all the musical touchstones of Europe.”

“It was an honour to be there, knowing that we get to play in The Beatles' house, the Royal Albert Hall,” says voluble CCR drummer Doug Clifford. “I'm an athlete, and always have been, so I'm competitive about when I play to win. I wanted us to do the best possible job. We all felt that way, I'm sure. And I think we pulled it off. I'm pretty sure I saw Eric Clapton [at the RAH], and I think I saw Paul McCartney. Just knowing where we were and what we were doing was a thrill.”

The gig finished with CCR's customary long-form closer *Keep On Chooglin'*, after which the band received a 15-minute standing ovation.

More than half a century later, the just-released *At The Royal Albert Hall* captures the show in all its verve and glory. It's accompanied by a documentary, *Travellin' Band: Creedence Clearwater Revival At The Royal Albert Hall*, which features the entire show. (CCR's *The Royal Albert Hall Concert*, released in 1980, was reportedly from a concert at Oakland Alameda County Coliseum.) Narrated by actor Jeff Bridges and directed by Bob Smeaton, who was responsible for *The Beatles Anthology* TV series, it represents CCR at their most formidable.

“In terms of the performance, what I'd forgotten was the energy and the passion,” marvels bassist Stu Cook. “I think we went there with the intent to take no prisoners. When I saw the performance, I was kind of surprised by the intensity of it. Woodstock was great, but it was incredibly



Motor well and truly runnin': CCR in 1970.



"It was a rocket ride. Once the start button had been pressed... the larger arc of our career was pretty much out of our hands."

Stu Cook

chaotic and late and stressful. I think that first time we played the Royal Albert Hall was probably the pinnacle for me. If I could relive a night, that would be it."

Despite suggestions to the contrary, CCR were no overnight sensations. Their success was the product of diligence, tenacity and sheer staying power. Initially forged in the suburbs of Northern California in 1959 as an instrumental trio, The Blue Velvets, things first started to move with the arrival of Fogerty's elder brother Tom on rhythm guitar and lead vocals.

Billed as Tommy Fogerty & The Blue Velvets, the band released three unremarkable singles on a local Oakland label between 1961 and '62, grounded in the music they'd grown up with: 12-bar blues, rockabilly and doo-wop. But the British Invasion, spearheaded by The Beatles, brought a change in direction. "These great British groups took over where America left off," Clifford says. "Rock'n'roll was an American phenomenon, but it had got kind of boring. And the Brits said: 'Well, we think it can be saved and we like it. We're going to do it.' And they did."

It brought a change of label too. In May 1964, three months after The Beatles' game-changing first appearance on US TV on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, The Blue Velvets auditioned for the San Francisco-based Fantasy Records, and were duly snapped up. Label co-owner Max Weiss, seeing an opportunity, encouraged the quartet to embrace the UK beat boom on early singles like *Don't Tell Me No Lies* and *You Came Walking*. Weiss insisted on releasing these under the name The Golliwogs, in

an appallingly misguided attempt to make the band sound British. They made no impact. A further handful of singles suffered a similar fate. 1966 saw the emergence of John Fogerty, now lead singer, as the band's dominant force on *Fight Fire* and the howling psych-rock of *Walking On The Water*. Perhaps thankfully, this run of failure was interrupted by a spell of National Service for Clifford and the younger Fogerty.

On his return in 1967, Fogerty delivered his strongest song to date. *Porterville* was a pre-echo of the classic CCR sound, conceived on the parade field in the Army Reserve unit. "During all that marching I would get delirious, and my mind would start playing little stories," he told Creedence biographer Hank Bordowitz. "They all seemed to be sort of swampy and southern, in the woods and with snakes; Br'er Rabbit, Mark Twain, a great old movie with Dana Andrews and Walter Brennan called *Swamp Water*. So I ended up writing *Porterville* while I'm stomping around in the sun."

Released as the final Golliwogs single, in November '67, *Porterville* had Fogerty handling production as well (bizarrely credited as 'T. Spicebush Swallowtail'). Afterwards, the band rang the changes once more.

Coinciding with Fogerty's decision to sack "sappy love songs" in favour of narratives, the foursome took on a fresh moniker. Creedence Newball, a good friend of Tom Fogerty's, provided the initial impetus. A TV ad for a brewing company (who prided themselves on "clear water") gave them added splash, while 'Revival' was an indicator of their commitment to the cause, a renewed statement of intent.

Porterville was reissued as Creedence Clearwater Revival's debut 45 the following January.



Perversely, however, it was a cover that reversed the band's fortunes. A swamp-rock version of Dale Hawkins's *Suzie Q* was sent to progressive Bay Area radio station KMPX. The track was the kind of open-ended attack – eight-and-a-half minutes spread across both sides of a single – that chimed with the fluid psychedelia of the times.

But it was actually a product of rigorous discipline and endless rehearsals; CCR were no jam band. Instead, and unlike many of their San Francisco contemporaries, some of whom mocked them for their straight-up aesthetic, they were a totem of rootsy economy. "Our peers laughed at us, called us the boy scouts of rock'n'roll," Clifford told West Virginia's *Herald Mail* in 2015. "They said we'd never make a thing out of the music that we were playing, said we were not cool, not hip like they were. And it was kind of funny."

Suzie Q stalled just outside the *Billboard* Top 10 in the autumn of '68. By then Fantasy had seen enough to warrant an album. CCR's self-titled debut did well enough that year, peaking at No.52 in the US, although its other standout song (besides *Porterville*) was a further cover: a dynamic revival of Screamin' Jay Hawkins's old creep-show classic *I Put A Spell On You*.



CCR may have finally found some traction, but they were still a band in search of an identity. It was a challenge that John Fogerty resolved to meet head on. "I had kind of taken stock at the end of 1968, and looked around at my situation," he remembers. "We had a hit with *Suzie Q*, but also, at least to my way of thinking, I realised it was kind of a novelty hit. It didn't necessarily announce a whole big career in an important cultural turn. I didn't have a manager, didn't have a publicist and we were on a very tiny jazz label. I said: 'Man, I'm going to just have to do it with music.' And I gave myself that directive and I stuck to it. I figured I had to do it, otherwise it wasn't going to happen."

It didn't look like much from the outside, but the vacant garage warehouse at 1230 5th Street in industrial Berkeley, just a few blocks over from the interstate, was Creedence's hothouse. Thanks to John Fogerty's demanding work ethic, the band rehearsed there almost daily. It was enough for Doug Clifford to refer to it as The Factory.

In the preamble to the Royal Albert Hall show, Bob Smeaton's film offers a rare glimpse of life inside the rehearsal space. "We had a smaller factory in Doug's backyard at first," Stu Cook explains. "It was just a little tool shed, and we managed to stuff us and our small amplifiers and a drum set in there once the lawn mower and brooms and rakes were all taken out. And that's

"Our peers laughed at us, called us the boy scouts of rock'n'roll. They said we were not cool, not hip like they were."

Doug Clifford

where we went every day from ten until two or three in the afternoon.

"When we got enough money where we could actually lease a proper rehearsal space, then it became the real factory," he continues. "It was basically just a large warehouse-type building with a couple of floors, and all the way in the back is where we carpeted and put up the blue velvet

drapes, turned that red carpet down and turned it into The Factory."

"It was a great place to be," Clifford adds. "We had our music area, but at the same time we had a basketball hoop at one end of the space and ping-pong tables and foosball tables. It was kind of our home away from home. We were working in there, all trying to achieve the same goals, all of us in our different roles. It was a very productive place to be."

The Factory was where CCR became a proper band, refining their technique and locking in as an extraordinarily tight unit. They reached deep into the history of rock'n'roll – hard-charging blues, R&B, swampy soul, a little country – to fashion what Fogerty once called "a corruption of what has happened before", made fierce by a burning intensity.

As the quartet progressed, so did Fogerty's songwriting. He may have been a Californian kid, but his chosen milieu was the Deep South and its attendant mythology. The region's psycho-geography, and rich storytelling traditions, lent themselves to his new songs. *Proud Mary*, ➤

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL



London calling: CCR in front of the Albert Memorial opposite the Royal Albert Hall, April 15, 1970: (l to r) John Fogerty, Stu Cook, Tom Fogerty and Doug Clifford.

released in early 1969, was the first manifestation, written two days after Fogerty was discharged from the National Guard. It told the tale of a jaded city boy who leaves it all behind to hitch a ride 'on a riverboat queen', the Mississippi paddle steamer of the title.

"One of my favourites that Leiber and Stoller wrote was a Coasters song called *Idol With The Golden Head*, because it was so colourful and kind of a complete story about an event," Fogerty explains of his immersion in narrative-driven pieces. "Another person very much like that is Chuck Berry. All his songs seem to tell a story with pictures. Bo Diddley had a song called *I'm Bad* and he talked about knocking some guy's legs out of place. Or *Who Do You Love?*, where you had a 'chimney made out of a human skull' and a 'cobra snake for a necktie'. Pretty graphic and scary imagery for a middle-class white boy. And very exotic too. Those were things that showed you the possibility of just using your imagination."

Driven by its freedom-riding gospel motif 'Rollin', rollin', rollin on the river', *Proud Mary* spoke to something timeless within the American psyche. The single became CCR's first million seller, stalling just shy of the No.1 spot in the States and going Top 10 internationally.

Another single, *Bad Moon Rising*, another instant classic, followed in April. It lifted Scotty Moore's guitar lick from Elvis Presley's *I'm Left, You're Right, She's Gone*, and Fogerty sang of a looming apocalypse, stuffing the song with ruinous images of hurricanes, floods and earthquakes. Its ringing rhythm and upbeat melody provided a delicious contrast.

Like its predecessor, *Bad Moon Rising* peaked at No.2 on the *Billboard* chart, although it topped charts elsewhere, most significantly in the UK.

Eventually it also followed *Proud Mary* into the lexicon of popular music, inspiring covers by Jerry Lee Lewis, Bruce Springsteen, Bo Diddley, Nirvana and many more down the years.

Creedence Clearwater Revival ascended steeply. *Bayou Country*, the first of an incredible three studio albums in 1969, was a major hit at the turn of the year. It drew much of its symbolism from a fetishisation of the American South. As did its follow-up, *Green River*, released in the first week in August. The band appeared on the sleeve posed in a dappled glade, like backwoodsmen reluctantly coaxed into the open.

The immaculate title track, another huge hit single, played directly into the same idea, introducing characters such as Old Cody Junior

"We were number one in the world in record sales in 1969 and 1970. We were the first band to outsell The Beatles and to take their place."

Doug Clifford

against a backdrop of catfish, bullfrogs, and barefoot girls dancing under the moon. But Fogerty was pulling obliquely from his own childhood, transposing family visits to a Sacramento Valley creek on to an imagined bayou. *Green River* was the name of a favourite lime syrup.

Fogerty never seemed to rest. Songs poured out of him at an astonishing rate, the product of extreme focus and self-will.

"I was really busy, but I liked that," he recalls. "I was almost addicted to that. It might be some form of a drug produced naturally, like endorphins when you're jogging. The best part for me was sitting down and trying to write a song and maybe not coming up with anything right then, but at

some point, pretty quickly, coming up with a song that wasn't there before. And it was all such a sort of mysterious process."

As Creedence's star continued to rise, demand grew. In between recording sessions, rehearsals and American dates, they swiftly became staples on the burgeoning festival circuit. They played to 200,000 people at the Newport '69 Pop Festival in June, on a bill that also included the Jimi Hendrix Experience, Eric Burdon and Jethro Tull, among others. Within weeks they'd appeared at major festivals in Atlanta, Denver and Atlantic City.

"It was a rocket ride, definitely," says Cook. "Once the start button had been pressed, we might have thought we had some control over it. I guess we had a modicum of control day to day, but the larger arc of our career was pretty much out of our hands."

CCR were also one of the first acts to sign up for the Woodstock festival. As the hottest band in America, Cook believes they were used as bait to lure others. Their planned Saturday night headline slot didn't quite take place, as it turned out, due to bad weather and technical difficulties throughout the day. With the schedule already running late, CCR instead took to the stage after midnight, following the Grateful Dead.

"I think we did connect with the crowd," Cook suggests. "It was hard to tell. The audience had just suffered through the worst day of probably most of their lives with the rain, mud and lack of food, just the whole thing, the overcrowding. But they were apparently making the best of it, so it was up to us to do that as well."

John Fogerty, however, felt that CCR underperformed, leading to his insistence that the band were omitted from both the Woodstock album and Michael Wadleigh's subsequent film.

In the meantime, Creedence's hot streak continued. Fogerty had two new hit gems that appeared on a double A-sided single in October: *Down On The Corner* and *Fortunate Son*. The two couldn't have been more different. The former was a funky feelgood tune, freighted with autobiography, about a struggling four-piece (Willy And The Poor Boys) jamming on street corners. *Fortunate Son* was a raging commentary on elitism, reflecting the widening schisms in American society due to the ongoing Vietnam War. Fogerty was incensed that sons of the affluent political class were allowed

to dodge the draft, while ordinary men were shipped off to South East Asia in their thousands. It remains one of his greatest songs.

Both tracks appeared on the *Willy And The Poor Boys* album a month later. It was another huge success, selling half a million copies within six weeks. *Rolling Stone* hailed CCR as the Best American Band. It was reward for an almost impossibly productive year.

"John's theory was that if we're ever off the charts, we'll be forgotten," says Clifford. "The industry tells you don't put a single out unless you're releasing an album with it. But we did that several times, to have something on the charts at all times, and that's how we did it. And it didn't seem to hurt our album sales at all. Not only did



Calm before the storm: sound-checking at the Royal Albert Hall, April 14, 1970

“We got a fifteen-minute standing ovation [at the Albert Hall] from the British crowd and we didn’t go out and do an encore.” Doug Clifford

we do three albums in sixty-nine, but we also toured behind all three and some other things too, like Woodstock. We were at warp speed, but we were always straight and sober when we worked. We couldn’t have done it otherwise.”

The advent of a new decade seemed primed for Creedence. They started with a habitual flurry, releasing another double whammy 45 in January 1970. *Travelin’ Band* was Fogerty’s exuberant homage to the rock’n’rollers who’d first inspired him: Elvis, Little Richard, Chuck Berry. The flip-side, *Who’ll Stop The Rain*, was more contemplative, a politically pointed song about failed promises and dashed ideals. It was another platinum seller across the globe, and CCR toasted its success with a hometown show at Oakland Coliseum at the end of the month.

By April, with the *Willy And The Poor Boys* album peaking in the UK Top 10 and two fresh classic singles in the shops – *Up Around The Bend* and *Run Through The Jungle* – the band set out to conquer Europe. The eight-date trip involved sold-out gigs in France, Germany, Holland, Denmark and Sweden, with the show at London’s Royal Albert Hall undoubtedly the most prestigious.

“For me, performing live was the best part,” states Fogerty. “*Born On The Bayou* was pretty good to play; I loved *Keep On Chooglin’* too. I also always loved *Suzie Q*. Those were songs where I got to stretch out a little. It just seemed like everything was working out well.”

The only thing that could stop Creedence, it seemed, was themselves. Director Bob Smeaton points out that: “When those guys walked off the stage at the Royal Albert Hall they were a band of brothers. Tight as friends and tight as a band.” But within the group, cracks had already started to form.

John Fogerty’s iron grip on the band had been evident in his decision to veto their inclusion in the Woodstock album and film. Now, with a full house at the Albert Hall screaming for more, there was another autocratic call.

“We got a fifteen-minute standing ovation from the British crowd and we didn’t go out and do an encore,” Doug Clifford rues. “That was one of the things that I thought was John’s type of leadership, where you punish instead of helping to change the situation or make something better. It was disingenuous. John does encores now, but that was something he took away from the band.”

Creedence Clearwater Revival would reach their commercial peak in the summer of 1970 with their fifth album, *Cosmo’s Factory*, named after the band’s rehearsal space. It was

compounded by another one, *Pendulum*, in December, by which time there was real dissension within the band. While Stu Cook, Doug Clifford and Tom Fogerty wanted more of a say in the studio, John, the younger Fogerty, stood firm. By early 1971, Tom had quit. A year later, Creedence were done completely.

The story of CCR’s fall-out and collapse is a whole other tale. Ultimately, they’re a band best celebrated rather than mourned. As the *At The Royal Albert Hall* album proves, theirs was one of the defining sounds of the counter-cultural era,

even if they actually occupied a place somewhere closer to the popular culture.

“We were number one in the world in record sales in 1969 and 1970,” says Clifford, still immensely proud of the band’s many achievements. “We were the first band to outsell The Beatles and to take their place. In fairness to The Beatles, their career was starting to fade and go the other way and ours was going up like a rocket ship. But we wanted to be number one. That meant a lot to us.”

At The Royal Albert Hall is out now via Craft Records.



STILL RO

For years **Nickelback** were an undeserving target for ridicule. For a while the jokes hurt, but with multi-platinum record sales and hits they were able to have the last laugh. Now, with new album *Get Rollin'* more than likely about to continue the band's successes, they're still smiling.

Words: **Paul Elliott**



LLIN'





Silver Side Up-era Nickelback in 2001: (l-r) Ryan Vekedal, Ryan Peake, Chad Kroeger, Mike Kroeger.

For an audience of one, Chad Kroeger is playing a couple of Nickelback's greatest hits, and very much enjoying himself as he does so. Sitting in the lounge area of Mountainview Studios, the recording facility at his home near Vancouver, he's just been asked about something he said 20 years ago, when he and the band were enjoying their first taste of the big time as their breakthrough song *How You Remind Me* topped the chart in their native Canada, the US and beyond. "It's our *Stairway To Heaven*, our *Hotel California*," Kroeger had said back then. "It's a song that Nickelback's never going to be able to duplicate."

Now, he smiles as he remembers that comment. "At that time, I was probably terrified I'd never write another song as good as that," he says. "But..." He picks up an acoustic guitar, leans back in his chair and strums the intro to *Photograph*, another of his global mega-hits. "I'd say this was pretty close," he says, arching an eyebrow for comic effect. Then he knocks out a few bars of *Rockstar*, yet another multi-platinum smash. "That one was pretty good too."

He places the guitar back on its stand and talks about the thread that unites these three hits songs. In a word: "Relatability." *How You Remind Me* was his 'I hate you' break-up song. *Photograph* recalled his teenage rites of passage with bittersweet nostalgia. In *Rockstar* he sang, with tongue in cheek, of how he, like so many others, had dreamed of getting rich and famous.

"I love universal themes," Kroeger says. "You want people to identify with what you're singing about. I want them to say: 'He's singing my song. He's singing to

me. I know what that feels like.' If you can achieve that relatability in a song it can be very powerful."

It is all so very simple and unpretentious – these universal themes delivered with big tunes in a rugged yet radio-friendly style.

But one person's meat-and-potatoes rock anthem is another person's vacuous cliché. Hence what might be termed the Nickelback Paradox. Because what has made them one of the most successful rock bands of the 21st century has also

"Whatever the joke, the punchline was Nickelback. Funny's funny to a point, and then it's just hateful and hurtful."

Chad Kroeger

made them a target for ridicule, to an extent that no other band of modern times has endured. Famously, there was a joke from Adam Sandler: "If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, then have we found the perfect location for a Nickelback concert?" There was the gag posted on Twitter from a troll posing as Dave Grohl: "If you play a Nickelback song backwards you'll hear messages from the devil. Even worse, if you play it forwards you'll hear Nickelback."

Kroeger is honest enough to admit that this abuse, the scale and consistency of it, has got under his skin. "Once a certain number of comedians started taking shots at us, it really took on a life of its own," he sighs. "Whatever the joke was, the punchline was Nickelback. I'm a human being, so funny's funny to a point, and then at a certain point

it's like, okay, this is just sort of hateful and hurtful. And once it goes into that realm it's nasty."

That said, Nickelback's popularity has been good for his self-esteem as well as his bank balance. "There's that other end of the spectrum," he says, "where people say: 'If everybody hates them, how come every time they come to town there's an arena full of people singing their songs?' At least we have that. If we didn't we probably would have quit."

And for Kroeger, right now there is a sense of a change in attitude towards his band. "These days it feels like there's a softening," he says. "Like: 'Maybe we could give Nickelback a break? Maybe we were a little hard on them?'"

Mountainview Studios, where Nickelback recorded their new album *Get Rollin'*, is in a converted hay barn on what was once a working farm. Kroeger bought the 20-acre estate in 2002 with the money he made from *How You Remind Me*. The studio was installed in time for the band to finish their 2003 album *The Long Road*, and it's where they continued to record until Kroeger sold up after 10 years and moved to Toronto with his then-wife, fellow Canadian singer Avril Lavigne. *Get Rollin'* is the first album recorded here since he bought the place back. The band's lead guitarist Ryan Peake and drummer Daniel Adair live close by, while bassist Mike Kroeger, Chad's elder brother, lives in Los Angeles.

In the 20 years since *How You Remind Me* changed his life forever, Chad Kroeger has aged well. He turns 48 on November 15, and looks trim in all black. The long hair was cut short years ago, but the micro-beard has survived. What is also evident, during a lengthy conversation with *Classic Rock*, is that he remains as straight-talking as he

was back in 2002 when this writer first interviewed him. He's funny, too, and no subject is off limits, be it his personal life or his occasional use of recreational drugs.

He begins by discussing the new album, and how making it – at a leisurely pace, enforced by the pandemic – saw Nickelback break out of a working pattern that was

leading towards burnout. "This time there was no hurry, which was nice," he says. "Everything up until now had been at that breakneck speed – tour, make a record, tour, make a record – for a quarter of a century. Burning the candle at both ends is an understatement."

The fact that he's sitting in a converted hay barn isn't lost on him when he says with a laugh: "Everybody always says: 'You gotta make hay while the sun shines.' Well, I don't know how much hay I was supposed to make! I think I'm over my quota here – can I please get off the hay wagon?"

The new album is mostly tried and tested stuff. As Kroeger says of opening track *San Quentin*: "It's nice to kick the door open with that – to remind everybody that we're a hard rock band." *Those Days* is an archetypal post-grunge power ballad, and another exercise in nostalgia – essentially a sequel to *Photograph*. "It's a throwback to the eighties," he says. "I get the feels every time I hear it." It sounds like a nailed-on hit. And there are two party songs with self-explanatory titles: *Vegas Bomb* and *High Time*, the latter beginning with a telltale coughing fit, echoing Black Sabbath's *Sweet Leaf*.





Kroeger and producer Joey Moi at Kroeger's Mountainview Studios in 2005



"I don't smoke like I used to," Kroeger says with a shrug. "The weed is way too strong now. And it's legal in Canada; you can drive down the store and pick up anything – weed candies, weed drinks. But I'm trying to stay off the sauce these days."

It was a very different story back in 2005, however, when, in the room where he's sitting now, the band worked on what would be their biggest-selling album. "When we were making *All The Right Reasons* we were constantly high," he says, laughing. "Because we had the luxury of doing the record in my studio, we had endless time to listen back and keep on layering stuff, and we'd just get baked on this spacey weed. I remember one time I came to and we'd all been staring at the floor, no music playing, nobody saying anything, for like ten minutes straight, just fucking high. Productivity went out the window. But in the end we snapped out of it and got the record finished."

As Kroeger sees it, there's one song from the new album that breaks new ground for Nickelback. "There's a really interesting left turn we take with *Tidal Wave*," he says. "It's got this cyclical chord structure that's so contagious. And I had fun with the chorus: 'Loving you is like surfing on a tidal wave'; like it's really exciting at the time, but everybody knows how this ends."

He reckons this is one of his better lines. But there are two songs on this album in which he digs much deeper, and in each there's a tragic story. The first, *Skinny Little Missy*, has the kind of title that a hair-metal band might have come up with around 1987. The lyrics refer to a strip club, but this is no *Girls, Girls, Girls*.

"I have to be careful here," he says. "And this has nothing to do with MeToo. It has to do with this specific story. There was a club owner in

he reveals. "It saddened me deeply, the thought of her and how she would be bargaining with God."

Such heavy subject matter is not new territory for Kroeger. On *Silver Side Up*, the album that sold more than 10 million off the back of *How You Remind Me*, there was *Too Bad*, a song in which Kroeger spoke of the pain he experienced in discovering at the age of 18 that he and his brother Mike had different fathers. On the same album there was *Never Again*, in which he addressed the subject of violence against women.

"When I said how I love writing about universal themes, that includes those things that other people are afraid to talk about," he notes. "And domestic abuse was one of them."

In this sense, *Silver Side Up* was not only the band's commercial breakthrough, it was also a personal breakthrough for Kroeger as a writer.

"I refer to it as cracking the code," he says. "And what I mean is I was no longer hiding behind metaphors, it was about me no longer having to explain what a song was about. I was really putting it out there. No one has to ask me what *Too Bad* and *Never Again* are about. If you have to ask, you're not listening to the song. So that type of openness and honesty is what I refer to as cracking the code. And the more I did it, the more I enjoyed it." ➤

"Once a certain number of comedians started taking shots at us, it really took on a life of its own."

Chad Kroeger

Vancouver, and she's who I'm singing about in this song. In the club she ran there was also a brothel. She was a strong businesswoman and she was a friend of mine. And there's a lot of speculation around her death, so I'm just gonna leave it there – I'd like to stay breathing!"

The other tragic story – in *Just One More*, the last and best song on the album – is even closer to home. "That one is about my cousin who was pregnant and lost her baby in the third trimester,"



Kroeger with Nickelback at the Manchester City Stadium, June 4, 2006.

When Chad Kroeger talks about the music he loves, he's a fan again, not a high-rolling rock star. It's the same way that Lars Ulrich talks about music, and it was Ulrich's band Metallica, more than any other, that inspired the young Kroeger to start playing guitar in 1988. "I was fourteen, and for me back then it was all about Metallica, Megadeth and Anthrax." As a thrash metal enthusiast the teenage Chad applied himself to the art of banging his head with a religious fervour. "My hair was really, really long," he says, laughing. "Because you had to be able to headbang, right? It sounds so fucking stupid when you talk about it now – why was headbanging so important?"

All these years later, Metallica's 1988 album... *And Justice For All* is one that Kroeger always goes back to. Another is *Vulgar Display Of Power* by Pantera, although he has mixed emotions when talking about a band who he says were "like brothers" to Nickelback.

Following the murder of Pantera's guitarist Darrell 'Dimebag' Abbott in 2004 – shot dead by a deranged fan while performing on stage in Columbus, Ohio with his post-Pantera band Damageplan – Nickelback delivered a powerful eulogy with *Side Of A Bullet*, an emotional, anger-fuelled track featuring a Dimebag solo compiled from previously unreleased out-takes. Now, Kroeger prefers to remember the first time he heard Pantera's music, and the seismic effect it had on him. It was at the Lollapalooza festival in Vancouver in 1992, when he was 18. "So many great bands played that

day," he remembers. "Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, the Jesus And Mary Chain. But in between acts, *This Love* from Pantera was played over the PA, and it was the most incredible thing, this beautiful sort of ballad that turned into the most pissed-off scream of aggression."

In his mellowed moods, Kroeger enjoys the music of Creedence Clearwater Revival and – inevitably, given his penchant for weed – Bob Marley & The Wailers. But if he's really in the mood for a good time, when he's had a few drinks,

there yet is impeccable. It's astounding what he can hear and focus in on."

As producers go, Lange was as big as they come. Not only is *Back In Black* the biggest-selling rock album of all time, he followed it with a series of multi-platinum hits for rock artists such as Def Leppard, Bryan Adams and Foreigner, and also for his wife and muse, country superstar Shania Twain. But as Kroeger recalls of their first meeting, it was Lange's humility that really made an impression: "Before we started, Mutt said: 'You're

not having a hard time selling records, and you're not having a hard time writing songs. But hopefully I can take you in directions you normally wouldn't have gone in on your own.' And that was perfect for us."

As the *Dark Horse* sessions progressed, Kroeger couldn't resist asking for stories about the making

of *Back In Black*. What Lange remembered best, and with no small amount of pleasure, was an incident when, in the pursuit of perfection, he was pushing AC/DC's singer Brian Johnson to the limits.

"Brian Johnson was screaming," Kroeger recalls. "I mean, we've all heard the record, right? Brian would finish screaming these songs, and he'd come into the studio [booth] and collapse. His head was killing him. You can't go that hard and have your skull feel nothing. And one time, a producer who was working in the studio right next door came in and said: 'We can hear the screaming through the soundproof wall!' He looked at Mutt and said: 'You're gonna kill him!' And Mutt said: 'Yeah! But doesn't it sound great?'"

By the time Nickelback had finished working on *Dark Horse*, a close friendship had developed between Kroeger and Lange, which led to a rather surprising arrangement between them. "When Mutt and Shania were splitting up, he moved into my house for five months," Kroeger says. "So I got to know him pretty well." And what the reclusive Lange encountered in that period, as his well-

"I love writing about universal themes. That includes things that other people are afraid to talk about."

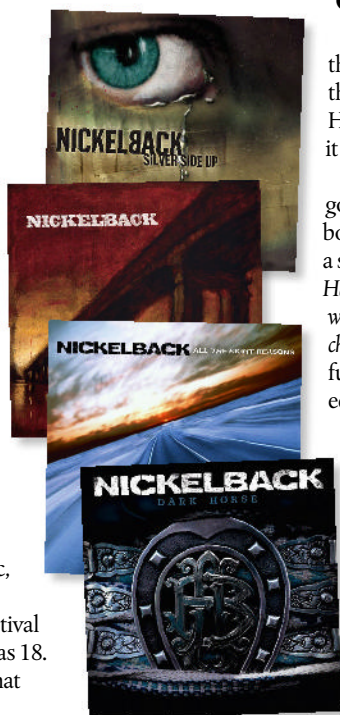
Chad Kroeger

there's one album that always hits the spot: AC/DC's *Back In Black*. He's played it countless times, and it still blows him away.

"All those songs that get you going with the involuntarily head-bob," he says. "They had it down to a science. And I love the lyrics in *Have A Drink On Me*: 'I'm trying to walk a straight line on sour mash and cheap wine!' Just brilliant. All that fun and simplicity, but it's got that edge to it, like: argh!"

In 2008, when Nickelback made the album *Dark Horse* with Mutt Lange, the man who produced *Back In Black*, for Kroeger it was a dream come true and an eye-opener.

"I learned so much from working with Mutt," he says. "His ability to know what's right and when it's not quite



protected private life was exposed in the media, was in many ways similar to Kroeger's experience during his relationship with Avril Lavigne, which began in 2012 and ended with an amicable divorce three years later.

"When we were married we lived in a little village," he says. "We'd go to this twenty-four-hour grocery store at midnight with our hoods up, but they still knew it was us. One time we were in the checkout line and we saw a picture of the two of us on a newspaper with an 'X' across our faces and the headline: 'They're splitting up!' At the time, we couldn't have been happier, so we laughed it off, and she grabbed the paper, she wanted to read it! But really, it was fucking weird. I can't describe how alien that feels. It is the epitome of bizarre."

Back in 2002, when Kroeger was six months into a relationship and head-over-heels in love, he suggested, with a wry smile, that the best route to writing another *How You Remind Me* was to get dumped. "I need to have my fucking heart ripped out and stomped on!" he said. "There's no motivation like that."

Today he's six years into his current relationship, although he confesses that things were looking a little shaky just a few hours before this interview began.

"She was pretty mad at me this morning," he says with a guilty laugh. "I thought it might have been six years and that's it! But sometimes you just have to play ball, even when somebody is losing their shit over something completely innocuous. You just have to realise that they're really upset and you have to make them feel better. That is what I have learned after living with six different women for various periods of time. I know I'll be in so much trouble for saying this, but fuck it, sometimes you just have to eat crow. I think successful relationships are so much about compromise. Let's leave it at that."

He never got around to having children, and reckons that's probably for the best. "I can honestly say I'm a little too selfish with my time. Not only that, but there is a huge part of me that is terrified that I'm gonna fuck them up. That they'll wind up in therapy going: 'I hate my fucking dad!'"

It sounds like the cue for another Nickelback joke: Why doesn't Chad Kroeger have kids? Because then he'd have haters in his own house. But in the end, he's the one having the last laugh.

No matter how much shit has been thrown their way, Nickelback have never faltered. And as Kroeger keeps on writing those hit songs, his belief in this band remains as strong as it was back in the 90s when they were a bunch of nobodies slumming it in the clubs of Canada's backwaters.

As he recalls of those distant times: "We were making our own independent records, and getting further and further in debt. You're calling up sweet old grandma: 'Will you please lend us five thousand dollars?' 'What? Are you in trouble?' 'Yeah, we're in trouble!' But I was running such a high level of bullshit with the other guys. It was used-car salesman shit. The full Jedi mind trick. I would tell them: 'Guys! Everything is just gonna be amazing!'"

And this time the punch line is his: "I just kept selling this fairytale to these guys and, well... here we are!" ●

Get Rollin' is out on November 18 via BeMG.

Living with the jokes:
Chad Kroeger in 2012.



FACE OFF

In a tumultuous decade, Ace Frehley and Peter Criss left, there was a disastrous concept album, rising tensions between Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley, and – most shocking of all – the removal of their make-up. **Kiss** nearly didn't survive the 80s.

Words: **Dave Everley**

In the annals of 20th-century history, Sunday September 18, 1983 will go down as being about as uneventful as it gets. The Caribbean islands of St Kitts and Nevis finally gained their independence after two centuries of British rule. Long-distance walker George Meegan completed a six-year-trek across the western hemisphere...

But in a small studio in MTV's New York HQ, something monumental was happening. There, the four members of Kiss – those panstickt titans of glitter-metal – were about to reveal their faces to the world for the first time in their 10-year-career. Stripped of warpaint and under unforgiving studio lights, these great American icons were ready for their close-up.

Watch the footage on YouTube now, and it's a strangely solemn experience. In the hushed studio, MTV 'VJ' JJ Jackson introduces the band in a fathoms-deep voice as, one by one, images of them flash on screen. At each beat, the shot of the made-up band member vanishes and is replaced by an image of them live from the studio floor: lead guitarist Vinnie Vincent looking vacant, drummer Eric Carr coquettish, guitarist/vocalist Paul Stanley glowering, bassist Gene Simmons smirking.

This was a very different kind of theatrics from the band who made their name as rock's greasepainted Gods Of Thunder. But for all the hoopla, it was born out of necessity. The huge successes of the 70s were an increasingly

distant memory, and the failure of their most recent albums had found them floundering in a new musical world, unsure of who they were and where they were going. Taking off the make-up was the very last (space) ace up their sleeve. This was make or break!

"It had really run its course," says Paul Stanley. "It was no longer the original images. We had a fox and we had an Egyptian guy. Maybe next we'd have Turtle Boy. It was becoming farcical. We needed to take a stand. If we were good enough and viable enough as a band, we would survive. If not, we would meet the extinction we deserved."

"Ace Frehley and Peter Criss wanted to leave the band. F***ing idiots to this day, poor guys."

Gene Simmons

Kiss's grand unmasking would be a tipping point in the most torrid decade of their career. Before it, they were heading platform boot-ward towards extinction. Afterwards, they slowly but surely regained their status as one of America's pre-eminent rock bands with a canon of towering 80s records that stood steel-clawed toecap to steel-clawed toecap with everything they'd done before, and helped lead MTV's rock revolution. Albums like *Lick It Up* and *Asylum* might not have had the boot-in-the-balls impact of Kiss's 70s heyday, but

at its very best their 80s output stands among the finest melodic rock that era produced. And it was made as Stanley and Simmons were fighting for the very soul of Kiss.

"We became victims of our own fame," says Stanley. "We lost the hunger, lost the passion, lost focus. We became more concerned with trying to get the approval of our peers, as opposed to maintaining our connection to the fans. We became swallowed up by our success."

Kiss had exited the 70s on a high, at least professionally. The disco dust-sprinkled *I Was Made For Loving You* had given them one of their biggest hits, albeit to the disgust of some of their rockier fans who – rightly – saw it as a shameless attempt to keep up with the times.

As Stanley steeled himself to enter the new decade, he had a lot on his mind. "There was a reorganising of my thoughts about what the band was and what it would be," he says now. "I quickly went from thinking that we were the four musketeers, that it was all for one and one for all, to: 'What do we do now?' When certain people aren't pulling their weight and sabotaging what you want to do. Just wanting to fuck things up."

"Both Ace Frehley and Peter Criss wanted to leave the band," says Simmons. "And the manager decided that we should do solo records to keep the band together: 'They're solo records, but they'll be Kiss records too,' he said. 'You'll have your cake and eat it.' Ace and Peter, fucking idiots to this day, poor guys."

In theory, the ploy of releasing four musically schizophrenic solo records on the same day in 1978 should have been a stroke of genius. Instead it backfired massively, with each record selling a fraction of what regular Kiss record would normally sell and leaving at least half the band facing a serious rethink as they entered New York's Electric Lady studio to record their next album as a group, *Dynasty*.

They didn't know it at the time, but *Dynasty* would become Kiss's most controversial album yet. In an attempt to cut ties with the past and move forward, they had roped in producer Vini Poncia, whose CV included Criss's solo album.

"I don't know if it was Vini's intention or the band's intention, but they wanted to explore the vocals and the harmonies," says *Dynasty* engineer Jay Messina, who had first worked with Kiss on

1976's earthshaking *Destroyer* alongside producer Bob Ezrin. "The more musical aspect of the band. And Vini was really good at that."

Dynasty was an admirable, if not entirely successful attempt to move things forward. *I Was Made For Loving You* was a thousand years away from their trademark rock bombast; inspired by their trips to notorious

Manhattan nightclub Studio 54, its shameless hopping on to the disco bandwagon was as shocking as it was brilliant. The funk intro of *Sure Know Something* was no less jarring, though at least that flipped into something more recognisably Kiss. Naturally, the band were savvy enough to throw their less open-minded fans a bone in the shape of Simmons's thumping *Charisma* and *X-Ray Eyes*. Today, Stanley views it with mixed feelings.

"Vini brought a different element to the band, because he came from a different era and





Strutting into the 80s: (l-r) Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons, Ace Frehley and new drummer Eric Carr.

a different style of music," he says. "I loved that, but it doesn't necessarily mean it had a place in the band. The danger of a producer is that they might have an interpretation of what they believe you are, and it can certainly dilute what you are if it's not on target."

Despite the success of *I Was Made For Loving You*, Kiss were wobbling like drag queens on nine-inch heels when they started recording the follow-up to *Dynasty*. *Unmasked*, released in 1980, would do nothing to assuage their hard-core fans. It eased back on the disco juice, only to replace it with the sort of uncharacteristically glossy pop-rock that screamed 'surefire hit' at the dawn of the new decade. This was MTV rock before MTV arrived.

"*Unmasked* is the product of a dysfunctional band," says Stanley. "People were surrounding themselves with a lot of sycophants who were telling them what was best for them to hear, but was ultimately most destructive for the band. Was I guilty of that? [Laughs] Oh, of course I was guiltless."

Sonically, *Unmasked* veered towards the featherweight. As Jay Messina puts it: "There was more attention paid to the musicality than the raw rock'n'rollness of the band." But, listening to it today, it's a far better record than its reputation suggests. With a chorus the size of the Chrysler Building, *Tomorrow* is the first great Kiss anthem of the 80s, while Ace Frehley's *Two Sides Of The Coin* and *Torpedo* dump a bucketload of Bronx grit all over the polished floors. The flip-side was Stanley's winsome *Shandi*, a bona fide AOR masterpiece that took its influence, oddly, from Bruce Springsteen's *Sherry*. With its mix of fluff and steel, the album was a bridge between Kiss's hard-rocking 70s past and their AOR-flecked 80s future. Not that the dwindling Kiss Army felt that way at the time: the album limped apologetically to No. 35 in the *Billboard* chart.

"To point a finger at Vini would be crazy," says Stanley. "We were the ones writing the songs. The buck stops here. All those albums were products of the guys at the centre of the storm, and that was us." While *Dynasty* and *Unmasked* were a sharp left and right turn respectively, their next album would be the sound of Kiss hitting the kerb and crashing straight into a garbage can.

Released in 1981, *Music From 'The Elder'* was intended to be Kiss's grandest musical statement yet. Talismanic producer Bob Ezrin was back on board, and they had a new drummer, Eric Carr, who had replaced Criss in May 1980, just before they played their sole US show in support of *Unmasked*, at New York's Palladium.

The first attempt to fix up Carr with a costume was less than successful. At management's insistence, he was going to be The Hawk. Except the effect wasn't quite what they wanted. "I looked like Chicken Man," the drummer later recalled. "I looked like a big chicken." In the end, Carr would come up with his own persona: The Fox.

But neither this latest addition to the Kiss menagerie nor Bob Ezrin could save *Music From 'The Elder'* from utter disaster. A largely incomprehensible concept album about a boy defending Earth from a race of super-alien, set to a soundtrack of portentous neo-classical rock that sounded like a Poundstretcher Pink Floyd, it remains Kiss's greatest folly. The whole experience was so bad that Ace Frehley

appeared on just one track. He left soon afterwards, although the band wouldn't officially announce his departure for another 12 months.

"*The Elder*' was the result of temporary insanity," says Simmons. "We didn't know which way to go."

"We lost our focus," says

Stanley. "I found myself looking for the respect of people who were never gonna respect what I was doing. Critical acclaim? Who needs it? We built our career on doing things our own way."

That may have been the case in the past, but as 1981 bled into 1982 the world was changing. MTV had launched the previous August, but Kiss had been slow to latch on to its potential. While the rest of the planet gleefully embraced this brave new television world, Kiss were battling for their very survival.

Losing one original member was careless. Losing two was foolish. Recording a grand folly that turned out to be the worst-received album of their career was positively suicidal. And Kiss knew it.

"Two members left because of drugs and alcohol and we'd just recorded *The Elder*. That was not an ideal situation," Simmons says with heavy understatement.

Still licking their self-inflicted wounds, Kiss had decided to top up the coffers and give themselves some wriggle room by releasing a 'greatest hits' album, *Killers*. The plan was to compile an album of old Kiss classics, topped off by four new tracks, produced by Michael James Jackson.

Enter Adam Mitchell. An easy-going guy who had scored a string of hits in his native Canada

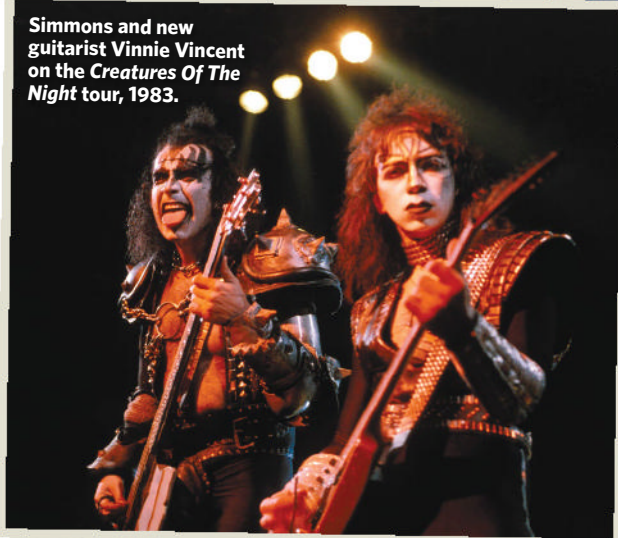


Leathered: Simmons and Stanley in 1982.

"Unmasked is the product of a dysfunctional band, surrounding themselves with a lot of destructive sycophants."

Paul Stanley

Simmons and new guitarist Vinnie Vincent on the *Creatures Of The Night* tour, 1983.



with 60s folk-rockers The Paupers, he had worked with such diverse artists as Cher, Art Garfunkel and Merle Haggard. In 1982 he had just come off the back of co-writing *Tears*, a hit single for John Waite, with a hotshot guitarist named Vincent Cusano, when he got the call from Jackson.

"He said: 'Listen, Kiss would like to do some co-writing. Would you like to do it?'" recalls Mitchell, who admits he wasn't a Kiss fan before he started working with them. "*The Elder*" had been a disaster. They were actually afraid that it was over. The brief was: 'Let's get back to what Kiss does best; enough of this concept album nonsense, let's write some really good Kiss rock'n'roll songs.'"

Mitchell quickly struck up a good working relationship with Simmons and especially Stanley. With the latter he wrote two new songs for *Killers: Partners In Crime* and *I'm A Legend Tonight*. The other two were Stanley's *Nowhere To Run* and *Down On Your Knees*, a co-write between the singer and a young Canadian songwriter named Bryan Adams. Tellingly, there were no new Gene Simmons songs on the album.

If *Killers* sounded like a contractual stop-gap designed to nudge the band back towards safer ground after the debacle of *The Elder*, it's because that's precisely what it was. And while none of the songs were truly memorable, they at least sounded focused.

What it didn't solve was the problem of the Ace Frehley-shaped hole in Kiss's line-up. Bob Kulick, guitarist with cult AOR heroes Balance, stood in for Frehley on the new tracks on *Killers* (a few years earlier he overdubbed Frehley's guitar parts on *Alive II*). But Kulick was unhappy with his playing being steered towards fitting into the Kiss format.

The band subsequently auditioned around 80 guitarists to fill the vacant slot, and they hadn't done so by the time they started work on their next album, *Creatures Of The Night*, even before *Killers* was finished.

"When we started doing *Creatures Of The Night*, Paul and I wrote the title track and a couple of others," says Adam Mitchell. "I ended up playing one of the guitars on the song *Creatures Of The Night* – that riff in the middle, that's me playing it."

A multitude of ghost guitarists ended up playing on the album, including Mr Mister's Steve Farriss and jazz-rocker Robben Ford. Another was Mitchell's sometime songwriting cohort Vincent Cusano.



Stanley on the *Lick It Up* tour. "I looked like a football player in a tutu," he later reflected.

"I am the one who introduced Vinnie to Kiss," Mitchell says with a sigh. "They tried him out, and his musical talent meant he was perfect for them."

At Mitchell's behest, Cusano was brought into the fold as both a songwriter and one of the numerous guitarists roped in to play on the album. Even though he doesn't play on every track, his impact on the record was immediate: *Creatures Of The Night* turned the dials up to 'heavy metal' and banished the lingering aftertaste of *Music From 'The Elder*'. Kiss sounded hungry again, and that was partly down to Vincent, who co-wrote two of the album's highlights: *I Love It Loud* (with Simmons), and show-stopping power ballad *I Still Love You* (with Stanley).

"Vinnie is a phenomenal talent," says Mitchell. "He plays like Ace, only way, way better. But – and it's a big but – there were personal issues right from the get-go, and they got in the way."

"Vinnie was an excellent co-writer, and somebody with real ability on the guitar, which nine out of ten times he sabotaged or just obliterated," says Stanley. "But in the studio, that

could be harnessed and moulded into what it should be, as opposed to where he invariably wanted it to go."

By the end of 1982, he had officially joined Kiss full time – although as a salaried, "non-voting" member. He was given his own make-up and persona: The Wizard. He was also asked to adopt a stage name. His own choice, Mick Fury, was blocked. Instead he was dubbed Vinnie Vincent.

"What was hard for me was taking the place of someone that fans really loved. I did not want to take anyone's place," Vincent said in Ken Sharp's official Kiss biography, *Behind The Mask*. "I was just there because I was asked to be there."

Despite his reservations, an Ankh-faced Vinnie Vincent made his stage debut with Kiss in Bismark, North Dakota in December 1982. *Creatures Of The Night* had been released two months earlier, and hailed as a return to form. The only snag is that people weren't buying it – it creaked into the US chart at No.45. Nor were they buying concert tickets – on the subsequent US tour the band played to half-empty venues, an ignominious fall from grace for a band who were one of the biggest draws of the 70s. ➤



Gene Simmons, Vinnie Vincent and Paul Stanley on the *Lick It Up* tour, February 1984.

ALAMY

“We’d done our heaviest album ever, cos we felt that we had something to prove. But the masses weren’t ready for it.”

Gene Simmons

“In June 1983, Kiss played the largest show we ever played, at the Maracana Stadium in Rio,” says Simmons. “There was anywhere from 190,000 to 210,000 people there. It looked like a nation – Kiss nation. We came back to America and it was dead. We’d done our heaviest album ever, cos we felt that we had something to prove. But the masses weren’t ready for it. *Creatures Of The Night* halted – it just didn’t work. It had to do with upheaval within the band and the upheaval of the times. We took a look at each other and went: ‘What are we gonna do?’”

The answer was: take off the make-up!

Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons both stand by *Creatures Of The Night*, and rightly so.

“*Creatures* was really a reaffirmation of us trying to get back on track from having been completely clueless for a while,” says Stanley. “*Lick It Up* was the next step.”

If Vinnie Vincent was unhappy with his situation in Kiss, he wasn’t letting on as Kiss entered New York’s Record Plant and Right Track studios with producer Michael James Jackson to record their fourth album of the decade. *Lick It Up* took the metalised blueprint of its predecessor and added some 80s flash: *Exciter* (featuring a guitar solo from Rick Derringer) showed the trials of the

last few years hadn’t blunted their edge, while the title track was a bona fide AOR anthem.

“*Lick It Up* was a really good album, though on a lot of levels I thought *Creatures* was better,” says Stanley. “But I thought that a good reason for taking off the make-up was because people were listening to the albums with their eyes, and they didn’t want to see the make-up. The make-up detracted from the music.”

And so, midway through 1983, Kiss made the momentous decision to wipe off the greasepaint. Stanley had wanted to lose the make-up for *Creatures Of The Night*, but Simmons was having none of it.

“I went: ‘What?! That’s sacrilegious! You’re out of your mind. It won’t work,’” the bassist says now. “It was actually Paul who felt more comfortable. Intrinsically, Paul on stage is closer to who he is off stage than I am. For me it’s a psychic trip – on stage it’s cathartic, I let out the inner demons.”

The subject was raised again when the band were recording *Lick It Up*. Simmons remained unconvinced until the very last minute.

“So we had recorded *Lick It Up* with a new line-up, and the material was what the material was,” says Simmons. “We stood around with a photographer and just took photos. I said: ‘We look like every other band.’ One shot had me sticking my tongue out – we had to have some kind of connection

with Kiss as we were before, otherwise we’re just Britny Fox or Cinderella. So I closed my eyes and went: ‘Okay, let’s try it.’”

The band had come to appreciate the value of MTV, and it was via that increasingly powerful music channel that they opted to make their big reveal. And so, at 11pm on Sunday 18, September 1983, the four members of Kiss finally made their first official public appearance without make-up.

“For me, the day was anti-climactic,” says Stanley. “It wasn’t the original band. The mystique revolved around the original four guys. Once that was gone, it was just a nice press angle. For me it didn’t have the same impact.”

If Kiss’s big day had failed to move Stanley, it was a different matter when the band found themselves on stage without the slap for the first time. “The first show without make-up was quite jolting,” says Stanley. “I remember looking across the stage and thinking: ‘What the hell are we doing in front of an audience in these clothes?’”

But there were more serious problems for Kiss than stepping out on stage without their battle dress and make-up. Always a difficult character, Vinnie Vincent was becoming visibly unhappy. And he was starting to act up. At a show at the LA Forum, he extended his guitar solo, keeping an increasingly apoplectic Stanley waiting for his cue at the side of the stage. In the dressing room afterwards, the pair reportedly came close to a fist-fight. The end was in sight for The Wizard.

“I just wasn’t living up to my full potential,” Vincent said in 1985, shortly after his inevitable departure from the band. “I wasn’t able to be who I am. I wanted to do things that would have made the group more exciting and more meaningful. *Lick It Up* probably shows about twenty-five per cent of what I’m capable of achieving.”

“It’s well documented,” says Stanley, firmly. “It’s nothing I need to go into. But he’s his own worst enemy – in addition to having a multitude of other



enemies out there now. He's somebody who is not the kind of person I want to be around."

Ironically, all the pain was worth it. The melodic-rock edge of *Lick It Up* helped it become the first Kiss album to sell 500,000 copies in the US since *Unmasked*.

"Where *Creatures Of The Night* died, *Lick It Up* came out and actually worked," says Simmons. "It became a big record, and the concert halls filled up. Without the make-up."

Kiss were now back on track. Or at least *some* of them were.

If the first half of the 80s had been Kiss against the world, then the second half would be Kiss versus themselves. When they began work on 1984's *Animalize*, the times were changing. Although Kiss's vision had started to dovetail with that of the MTV programmers, Def Leppard's 'Mutt' Lange-produced *Pyromania* had raised the bar on what a rock record could and should sound like. Elsewhere, a new breed of bands were nipping at Kiss's Cuban heels, among them a poodle-permed New Jersey group named Bon Jovi.

"We started working on *Animalize*, but there was upheaval," says Simmons. "Vinnie Vincent was a problem. He had to go. And music itself was changing. English pop came in with synthetic drums. And rock itself was changing – the hair bands became popular. The idea was that you had to look better than your girlfriend."

At least Kiss had a new guitarist to keep themselves moving forward. Mark St John – born Mark Norton – was a California-born six-string hero-in-waiting who the band picked after a string of auditions. In keeping with the times, he had a flashy contemporary style that was more Yngwie Malmsteen than Ace Frehley.

"I come from an older school of guitar players," says Stanley, "and the eighties were immersed in guys doing slide whistles and calliopes on their guitars, playing it with the whammy bars, turning it into something that isn't even a guitar as far as I'm concerned. But it was a component of bands at that point, and it needed to be incorporated. But that was another point where the band was going through more changes. We had a new guitarist. And there was a bass player who was AWOL."

These days, Simmons freely admits that by the mid-80s he had taken his eye off the Kiss-branded ball. "I started getting movie offers," he says with a shrug. "And I'm not the sort of person who is happy doing just one thing."

Simmons's big-screen career was stuttering but eventful. In 1984 he starred as an evil scientist in the sci-fi film *Runaway*. The same year, he appeared in an episode of *Miami Vice* as a nattily-dressed pimp. Over the next few years he popped up as a radio DJ in horror flick *Trick Or Treat*, and as super-villain Velvet Von Ragner in straight-to-video 'thriller' *Never Too Young To Die*.

"Yeah, I lost it in terms of spending time being committed to the band full time," he says now. "I succumbed to Hollywood, to pop culture, to the hair bands, to the times. Guilty as charged."

It was left to Stanley to steer the Kiss ship. And with his bandmate absent, he took on the task of producing the album. Any disgruntlement he felt



Stanley pulls the trigger of a rather fearsome love gun.

with Simmons was overshadowed by the problems he was having with Mark St John.

"Mark was kind of strange, because I'd send him home to construct a solo, then he'd come in the next day and play it," says Stanley. "I'd say: 'Play it again', and he'd play a completely different solo. I ended up either singing the solos to him, or sometimes even punching in and playing some of them. I would say to Mark: 'Go home and listen to Paul Kossoff.' He would say: 'I can play faster than he can.' I said: 'That's the problem.' He would look at me like I was speaking Mandarin."

St John had a different take on the situation. "I don't know why they even booked studio time

else could do it?" says the bassist. "I hate the studio. To me it's like pulling teeth. Some bands love it. But there's something that happens on stage that you can't get anywhere else. Me, I need to be worshipped as the god that I am."

Stanley is less jocular. "Making that album was basically me getting people to implement what I needed... To play the parts I couldn't."

One victim of Stanley's bloodless coup was the unfortunate Mark St John. "There are two songs on *Animalize* I didn't play on: *Lonely Is The Night* and *Murder In High Heels*," St John told Kiss biographer Ken Sharp. "I had reactive arthritis. My knuckles on my left hand were swollen up, and so were my

left kneecap and my Achilles tendon. So I virtually had to walk with a cane."

St John would later put his ailment down to the stress of the situation. But at the time, it presented a more immediate problem. The band were due to kick off the *Animalize* tour in the UK, and St John was in no fit

state to play live. Step forward Bruce Kulick.

Of all the people who have passed through Kiss, the hiring of Bruce Kulick was the most unusual. The younger brother of one-time Kiss session guitarist Bob Kulick, Bruce first met Stanley via his brother in the late 70s. He had also taken part in the mass audition before they hired Vinnie Vincent.

"Then Vinnie pulls whatever it was that put him out of the picture, and they're looking for a hotshot guitar player," Kulick says. "All of

a sudden, Mark St John is top of the list. I remember seeing the photo in *Kerrang!* magazine. I was like: 'This guy is wrong. This guy should not be in Kiss!' I had nothing against Mark, and it wasn't like I should have been in Kiss instead. It looked wrong. It was just wrong."

When St John began having health problems during the recording of *Animalize*, Bruce Kulick's name came up as an extra pair of hands. "My brother ➤

"Vinnie Vincent was his own worst enemy – in addition to having a multitude of other enemies out there."

Paul Stanley

when none of them were there," he said in the late 80s. "Gene was doing a movie in Canada, Paul was in Bermuda with [disco singer] Lisa Hartman that week, and Eric was in Florida, fucking some girls. So I'm in the studio recording – just me and a couple of engineers."

It's a mark of Stanley's determination and general dedication to the Kiss cause that not only was *Animalize* finished without him murdering at least two of his colleagues, but also that it sounded so good. The fact that it's one of the most overlooked albums in the Kiss canon can't detract from the fact that it stands as 35 minutes and 42 seconds of matchless 1980s AOR-tinged arena rock. At its best – *Heaven's On Fire* and the Jean Beauvoir co-write *Thrills In The Night* – it more than matched the cream of their 70s output, and placed Kiss at the head of the melodic rock pack.

For his part, Simmons was happy to cede control of the studio to Stanley. "Well, who





Kiss at Wembley Arena on the Crazy Nights tour, September 25, 1988: (l-r) Simmons, Stanley, Carr, Kulick.



Bruce Kulick and Paul Stanley don jungle-cat prints for the *Animalize* tour, December '84.

used to do that, so when I got a phone call I was shocked: 'Wow, they went to the younger brother, this is cool,' he says.

Kulick would play on the two *Animalize* tracks that St John was unable to complete. "I was thrilled. It was easy to work with Paul, I liked the vibe. And then he said a couple of prophetic words to me: 'Don't cut your hair.' I was, like, 'Why is he saying that? He's gotta be thinking that something is going on'."

In late August, his suspicions were confirmed when he received a call asking if he could fly to England to stand in for St John. His first gig as a temporary member of Kiss was in Brighton on September 30, 1984. When they returned to America two weeks later, Kulick was kept on for the US tour. This time, St John accompanied the band on the road. The plan was to ease him into the show with short 'guest' spots, building up to an entire show at the tour's conclusion.

"It was a strange situation, but I wasn't gonna do a Nancy Kerrigan – I wasn't gonna club him in the middle of the night in the hallway," says Kulick. "We even used to jam a little bit backstage. I kept it very positive – I knew I had the home-team advantage by touring with them. But the truth was that they knew that I had it down and I knew how to do this."

Kulick's self-assurance paid off. Arthritic or not, by the end of the tour Mark St John had sunk himself. "He didn't do badly when he had those chances to do parts of the show, and then a full show," says Kulick. "But he was kind of trying to upstage them, which is a really bad thing."

St John's final gig as a member of Kiss was on November 29, 1984. His tenure had lasted all of eight months. (Sadly, he died of a cerebral haemorrhage in 2007.)

"It was some time in December in 1984 that I got that phone call: Hey, we want you to be the guy," says Kulick. "I remember Paul calling me and I was thrilled. 'Wow, I got the gig!' I never got the big splash of 'New guitarist of Kiss!', but then there's a lot of pressure that comes with that."

Within a few months, Kulick was holed up with the rest of Kiss in Electric Lady, New York's pre-eminent studio, for his first official Kiss record, *Asylum*. It was a baptism of fire, not least seeing the push-pull dynamic of the Stanley-Simmons working relationship at close quarters.



healthy, but it was. They worked independently, then together. Gene is just a workaholic. Was he able to be in Kiss and pursue an acting career? Yes. Paul didn't quite see it that way, but then again it gave Paul purpose to say, 'I'm gonna produce the record, I'm gonna take over here'."

With Bruce Kulick on board, Eric Carr was no longer 'the new guy'. Five years in, and the lustre of being the drummer in Kiss was starting to fade.

"Back then, they were competing all the time," says Kulick. "That doesn't sound

sometimes," says Kulick. "There was a funny thing that happened in England on the *Animalize* tour. Some journalist from the NME or one of those magazines befriended him. The next thing you know, there's photos of him in the bathtub, drinking champagne, splashed in the paper. That didn't go down very well. At the airport the next day, Gene and Paul were like: 'What were you thinking?' He was a little unhappy, so that was him going: 'I'm gonna get in trouble with the parents.' I'd never put myself in that position. If I wanted to have fun with a girl, there was never gonna be a camera there."

"Yeah, I lost it... I succumbed to Hollywood, to pop culture, to the hair bands, to the times. Guilty as charged."

Gene Simmons

"When I first joined the band, the excitement and the fun of it wasn't... in the forefront of Eric's mind," says Kulick. "It was more like he was getting disillusioned. I used to get a lot of gripes from him, and I was like: 'Would you shut up! Do you realise how lucky you are?'"

Like Vinnie Vincent, Carr was getting restless. But the drummer's frustrations manifested themselves in less confrontational ways.

"Eric was a sweet, funny guy, but he acted out

With the release of *Asylum* highlight *Tears Are Falling* as a single, Kiss confirmed their status as the darlings of 80s MTV rock. That single was a prime-time slice of 80s soft rock, leagues away from the outright

70s aggression of the likes of 100,000 years. For all the resurgent success that *Animalize* and *Asylum* brought, by 1987 Kiss found themselves playing catch-up with the bands they'd inspired. Bon Jovi, who had supported Kiss in the UK on the *Animalize* tour, had shifted several million copies of their third album, *Slippery When Wet*. Poison and Cinderella weren't far behind. The fact that these bands ramped up the glamour quotient of their rock'n'roll wasn't

Continued on page 105

FRANCK CARDUCCI & THE FANTASTIC SQUAD



"A REALLY TOUGH ACT TO FOLLOW"
STING

"IMAGINATIVE, VARIED AND STRONG"
STEVE HACKETT

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DEC-07 : CAMBRIDGE [UK]
PORTLAND ARMS
DEC-08 : SOUTHAMPTON [UK]
THE 1865
DEC-09 : WIGAN [UK]
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DEC-10 : LONDON [UK]
229
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FEB 23 - DRUSO - BERGAMO, ITALY
FEB 24 - BRONSON - RAVENNA, ITALY
FEB 25 - CORNER LIVE - MARENO DI PIAVE (TV), ITALY
FEB 27 - NOCHTSPEICHER - HAMBURG, GERMANY
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LONG LIVE ★ ★ ★ THE ★ ★ ★ KING

Having trudged down the same sorry, drugs-littered road as some of his heroes, **Marcus King** has cleaned up his act and is now on the road to major success.

Words: **Ken McIntyre** Photos: **Lisa Czech**

There's a standard descriptor for Marcus King, and it's been used consistently since people started writing about him at all: he's an "old soul". I'm not here to break that chain. Sitting across from me in his vintage cowboy gear in some tiny office in some obscure wing of the House Of Blues in Boston, the guitar prodigy doesn't just look like some long-lost Flying Burrito Brother, he feels as worn-in and well-travelled as his old western shirt. Like he's been doing this forever. But he's only 26. "My old days weren't even that long ago," he says with a laugh.

They do stretch a good decade, at least. Born to a musical family in Greenville, South Carolina, King formed his band when he was a teenager, playing the sort of places you might see in the *Blues Brothers* movie: chicken wire strewn across the stage, rowdy crowds, late nights. You tend to grow up fast in that environment, and to learn on your feet.

"We were playing this gig, it must have been more than ten years ago now," he remembers, "but we played this gig and they didn't want to pay us.

I took my grandfather's advice; he was a gigging musician his whole life. He said: 'If they don't pay you, you still got to feed your guys. You gotta get paid. So just take their shit and start selling it. Take it to the next city and pawn it.' So I was like: 'Look, you ain't paying us, so I'm gonna take your PA and sell it so I can feed my guys.' I was fifteen years old. There was nobody at that gig, so I started taking that PA and loading it into my van. It was a bluff, for sure, and we ended up getting paid. But before that a big bar brawl ensued. A bunch of big guys showed up and there was a bar fight. It was right outside of a dispatch unit in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and the cops showed up in seconds. My drummer at the time got his ankle rolled in the

fight, but he didn't press charges because he had a bunch of weed in his car."

King laughs at the memory. "I think that's the craziest show I can think of. I mean, we've definitely had some moments."

Things have certainly changed since then. Tonight's gig is sold out. His new album, the Dan Auerbach-produced *Young Blood*, is soaking up critical praise, landing him on national TV spots, and he's routinely filling 2,000-seat clubs. Not bad for an album he initially thought might be his last. After a spate of heartbreak, heavy vibes and your typical rock-star descent into hard drugs, King was unsure whether he'd even be around to tour this album.

But it didn't work out that way. Fearing the same downward spiral into chemical ruin as his rock heroes, he has spent the past couple of years cleaning up his act. His fiancé, Briley Hussey, now tours with him and acts as the band's social director. "She really provided a lot of stability for me," King says. "She grounded me." As a result, he's cut back

on a lot of rock'n'roll's more notorious pastimes, as evidenced by the two of us sipping black coffees together, while his band drink beers and noodle around on guitars in the next room. "This is a sober tour, more or less," he says. "For me, at least. I'd rather just feel better, you know?"

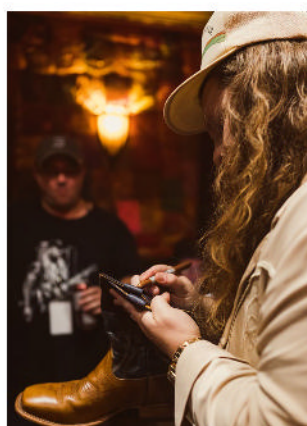
He says he doesn't miss the hangovers, nor the anxiety that comes with doing too much of anything. "Alcohol wasn't my thing anyway," he says about his past dalliances with use and abuse. "I was into other stuff." The sentence hangs in the air for the moment, but then quickly dissipates. This is not that kind of story. Marcus King is not that kind of guy, at least not any more. No one here is, really, as evidenced by the convivial ➤

"I don't care what you call it, I just like loud rock'n'roll guitar."

Marcus King



Hot ticket: another town, another sold-out venue.



"Hi, I'm Marcus." King at a meet-and-greet and (left) signing a fan's boot.

meet-and-greet we attend a few minutes after we finished talking. King says they've worked these notoriously cumbersome events out. "We basically set up at one of the bars in each club and just have a drink with the fans," he explains. "We do it at five o'clock, like a Happy Hour."

A less awkward encounter than the usual stiff autograph and photo sessions, then.

"It's still a little awkward, but it's a little looser."

The House Of Blues VIP room is crammed with fans, the majority of them twice the band's age. There's a table full of undrunk complimentary margaritas; these guys are not the party-hearty types, at least not at five pm. One guy slides off his cowboy boot and asks King to sign it. He does. "I just got married in these two weeks ago!" the guy enthuses. An ex-hippie type gushes about the new songs to bass player Stephen Campbell. "Have you ever heard of the Electric Flag?" the guy asks. "You guys remind me of them." Campbell says he hasn't, but will look them up on Spotify. More hands are shaken and pictures taken. King scans the room with an easy smile. "May we all stay humble," he says, mostly to himself.

Downstairs the room fills up quickly, and the sold-out audience is bathed in a purple glow by the club's impressive lighting rig. House Of Blues opened here in 2008, part of an ever-expanding chain that

originated down the road in Cambridge. It's directly across the street from Fenway Park, Boston's famous baseball field. King and his band visited it earlier today. "The head groundskeeper invited us over for a tour," he enthuses. That was a real treat."

"This is a sober tour, more or less. For me, at least. I'd rather just feel better."

Marcus King

This venue's address has been the site of many nightclubs and concert halls over the years, including Aerosmith's short-lived Mama Kin in the 90s, a notorious punk club called Spit in the 80s, and the Boston Tea Party, a 60s-era hotspot

that hosted shows by bands and artists including The Stooges, Led Zeppelin and Sly And The Family Stone. This room is storied, to say the least. It's also a massive, sprawling space, with three stories, and many bars, balconies and alcoves.

And there isn't a bad seat in the house. The audience is still mostly over 40 and seemingly well-heeled, but there are welcome groups of younger, scruffier fans as well.

Sets by comic Dean Delroy, singer-songwriter Ashland Craft and funky, shag-haired piano player Neal Francis open the

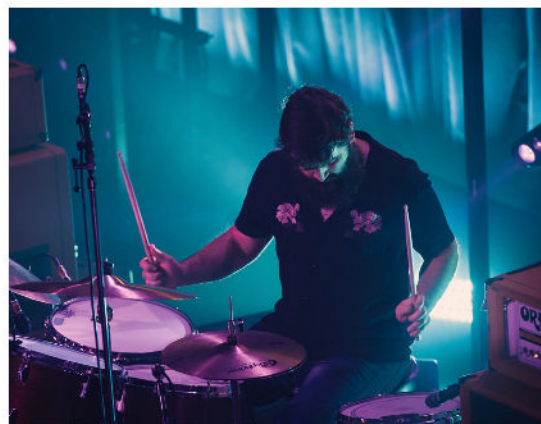
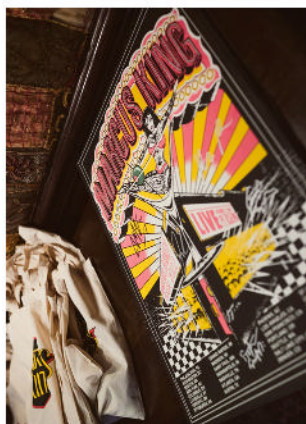
show. Francis is a full-tilt scorcher of a performer. *Prometheus*, from his 2021 album *In Plain Sight*, is the set's highlight, building from gritty R&B to sizzling, wildfire sci-fi space-rock. King's guitarist Drew Smithers joins them for their closer,

a blistering *Can't Stop The Rain*. On any other night, Francis himself would've decimated this place. Bigger things are definitely ahead.

After a brief respite, the main show begins. James Brown's *Payback* blares on the sound system as King and his band glide on stage. When they start playing, the first thing you notice is how tight their groove is. Justin Johnson and Chris Spies, his sax player and trumpeter respectively, elevate the band's sound from retro-bluesy to something grittier, more immediate, more alive. And,



Firing on all cylinders: King and (below) bassist Stephen Campbell and drummer Jack Ryan.



you know, King having his own horn section is a sure sign of success.

"I had one from the first show, way before any kind of success," he said with a laugh when we spoke earlier. "That was part of my business plan – acting like I'm making money, and hoping I eventually will."

The band lurch into *It's Too Late*, a soulful, Stonesque track from new album *Young Blood*. It's much more intense live than on the record. If they had a wall of Marshalls behind them, they'd probably sound like AC/DC. But they don't, they have a wall of Orange amps, so they sound like something else entirely, like the Allman Brothers and ZZ Top, like The Band and Jimi Hendrix. It's a startlingly vintage sound, a truly primordial, proto-everything roar. The only thing tying this band to today is the sheer weight of King's playing. I don't think anybody thought to be this ferocious before. It's really something to see. They play early song *Virginia*. King's notes sound predestined, his riffs like they were plucked right out of a lightning-struck sky. The song goes on for ever, but it's a good kind of for ever. Like *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* forever.

When we spoke, King mentioned how important improvisation was, and we're seeing that now. "There's kind of a guideline for each show, but improvisational parts we can stretch out," he said. "Some nights the song might be twenty minutes, sometimes it might be three. Depends on how we're feeling. Nothing's set in stone."

The band rip through another new one, the fire-breathing *Hard Working Man*. It sounds like Ted Nugent just discovered speed-metal. The band are so relentless, King doesn't even address the audience much for the first hour. When he does, he assures them they're in good hands. "Boston, you're lookin' real fine," he draws. "We gotta make sure you're feeling real fine, too." The band slip into *Beautiful Stranger*, a slow shuffle, practically a gospel number, really. It shows off King's impressive vocal range. It's also the only real breather the band offer for quite a while. By the time *Rescue Me* evolves into a rattling psych-metal

Lie Lie Lie is like some long-lost Thin Lizzy song, a chugging, barreling force of nature, more a relentless gravitational force than anything else.

There is, of course, an encore. There's no way this audience is leaving yet. King returns on his own with an acoustic guitar to pluck out a sad, dusty, beautiful *Goodbye Carolina*. His band, joined by Neal Francis on piano, return for a rousing cover of The Beatles' *Hey Bulldog*. And just to make sure that no brains in the venue are left unscrambled, on the climactic blues burner *The Well* they open every cylinder.

The remarkable thing about all this is that it's difficult to think of a person who wouldn't like King's music. It's soul, it's blues, it's southern, it's hard rock. The dude truly contains multitudes. "I don't care what you call it," he told me. "I just like loud rock'n'roll guitar."

A reminder: Marcus King is 26. He will outlive his heroes, and possibly better them. He'll likely outlive the

vast majority of this magazine's readership as well. So if you've ever spent a sweaty, sleepless night, tossing and turning, worrying about the future of rock'n'roll, rest easy. It's in good hands with this kid. He's taken all the good stuff, made it his own, and run with it. As the house lights go on, it takes a minute or two before everyone starts shuffling out. Like they're still stunned, maybe. Birth of a legend, right here. 🎸

Marcus King tours the UK in March 2023. Tickets from marcuskjngofficial.com

"Part of my business plan was acting like I'm making money, and hoping I eventually will."

Marcus King

freak-out, the audience is enthralled, all in. And drunk, finally. Roaming the balconies reveals a kind of bleary-eyed, middle-aged bacchanalia. It's difficult to pick a highlight when the entire set leaves people slack-jawed, but *Good And Gone*, another smoker from *Youngblood*, might be it, a blistering, relentless blues steamroller.

After the standard rock'n'roll bullshit of a drum solo and the obligatory band introductions, we get a gorgeous, massive, tear-gushing *Wildflowers And Wine* that masterfully mutates into soul ballad standard *When A Man Loves A Woman*. Set closer

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Having weathered early days of huge commercial success but critical flak, these days Gavin Rossdale is happy for **Bush** just to “make interesting music”.

Words: **Niall Doherty**

The best advice that Gavin Rossdale has ever received came when his band Bush were supporting David Bowie in the mid-90s. At the time, Bush were riding high. Their 1994 debut album *Sixteen Stone*, with its frenzied riffs and angsty, singalong choruses, had made the London quartet the latest grunge stars in a decade teeming with them, but there was a catch: bad reviews. Lots of bad reviews. It seemed that wherever Rossdale looked, someone was giving Bush an almighty kicking, each one making him want to throw himself out of the nearest window. One night, he asked Bowie about it, enquiring: “How do you deal with this shit?” and the icon calmly imparted three words that became a mantra for the Bush frontman: “Outlive your critics.”

Rossdale tells that story with the breeziness of a man who’s just done that. His place as everyone’s favourite punch bag – albeit a punch bag with great hair and perfect cheekbones – has long-since been put to rest as, sitting in his hotel room in Oklahoma, he looks back over the group’s frantic early days. He lives in LA these days and has the tan to show it, although his accent remains true to his London roots.

“Even to recount it doesn’t make sense. It feels like a different age, a different time,” the affable 56-year-old reflects. “It had its moments, but if you didn’t sell any records and you had no attention, no one gave you a shitty review. I learned to live with it. It was a reaction to the success.”

For a moment, Rossdale is perplexed at how he let all the bad press get to him, and then he remembers. “We were all caught up in the romanticism of it that it really did matter. Anyone who’s in a band is a needy person that needs validation. Singers especially.”

These days, Rossdale is a lot more at ease with his place in

the world. It’s 30 years since he formed Bush with original guitarist Nigel Pulsford, and he’s learned in the intervening period, which has taken in seven more Bush records either side of a group hiatus from 2002–2010, that being a musician is akin to being on a carousel. “You keep doing what you do, and every now and again it comes back round into the light,” he says. “But you never know when the light is going to come back on you, so you try and keep good at every show and with every song.”

These tales of endurance funnel directly into Bush’s new ninth album, *The Art Of Survival*. Heavier than their early records, the riffs more barbed and the grooves more pummelling, its title is of huge importance to Rossdale. “It’s

massive for me,” he says. “It just came up to me and seemed the exact thing. All I see around me is survival, all I see every night when I play is individual acts of survival to get there. Going through the pandemic was a terrible great leveller for everyone. *The Art Of Survival* seemed very fitting”

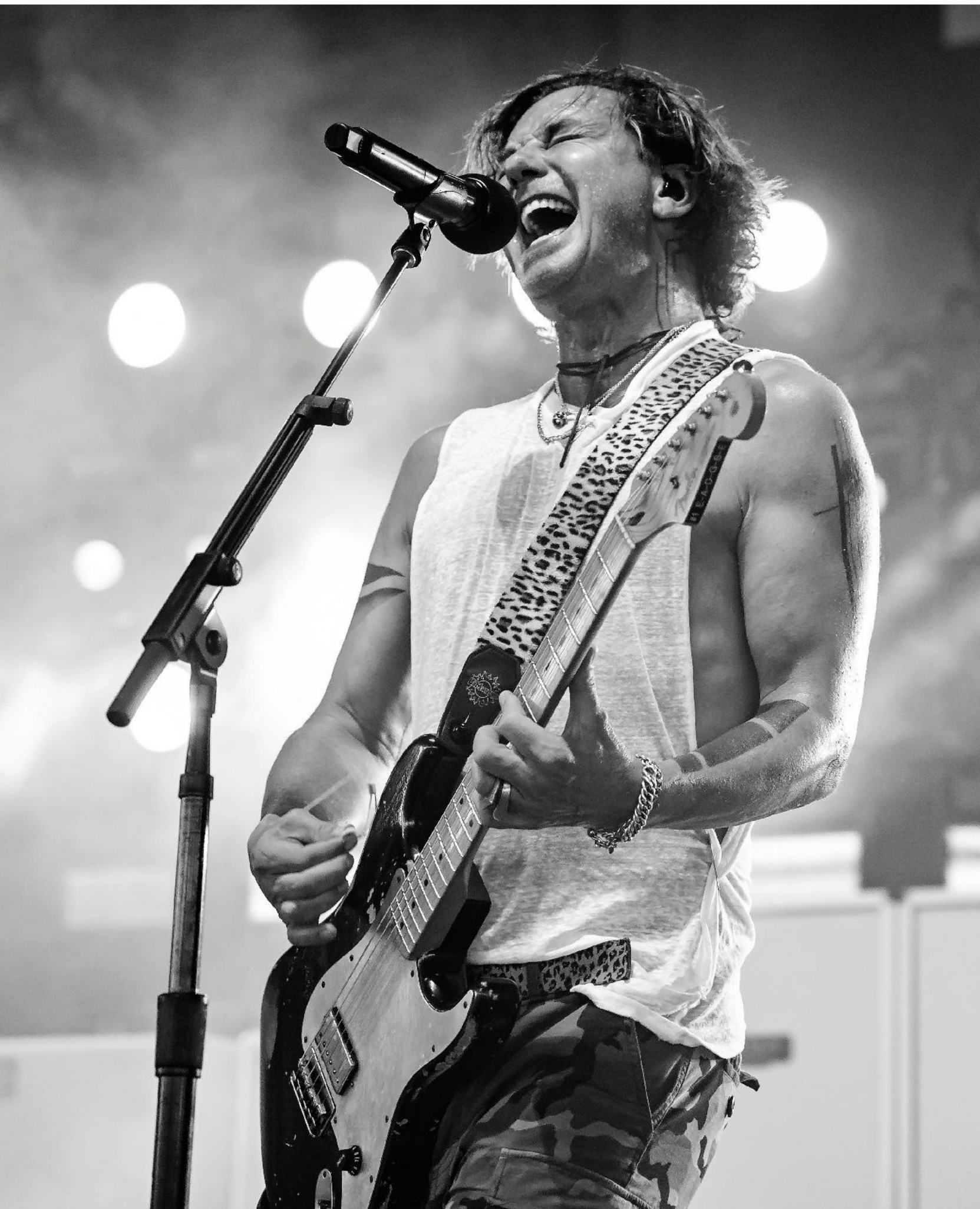
At the time we speak, Rossdale is on the road as part of a triple-

header with Alice In Chains and Breaking Benjamin. Bush go on stage first, in the early-bird slot of 6.30pm. Pre-pandemic, it wouldn’t have been an option he would have considered, but the models for touring have changed. “The reality was: do you want to struggle and play to six thousand people yourself while this other gig is going on over there, or be smart? There’s thirteen thousand people there when we play, so it’s really fun. We always have that slight underdog feel, but you know you’re going to go out and have a great show and play hard and fast for an hour.”

He especially enjoys it when he spots the other bands watching from the sidelines. “That’s when you know you’re cooking,” he declares. “If there’s no one at any of the ➤

“Anyone who’s in a band is a needy person that needs validation. Singers especially.”

Gavin Rossdale





Bush 2022: (l-r) Gavin Rossdale, Corey Britz, Nik Hughes, Chris Traynor.

shows, you're like a sad entity, but when you're creating a bit of a party and atmosphere, it's fun, it's a good vibe."

Backstage, Rossdale is the sort of person who says hello to everyone – the other bands, the crew, the guys putting up the lighting rigs, the team sorting out all the pyrotechnics. Numerous jaunts around the US means that he knows lots of the local crew too; when he showed up in Houston recently, security asked about the whereabouts of his dog, Chewy. "I like that," he says, smiling.

Despite Bush's longevity, Rossdale sees himself less as a veteran and more of what he describes as a "seasoned regular". He feels like the group are in their second incarnation (which, considering he's the only remaining original member, they are) because they don't flood their live sets with a give-the-crowd-what-they-want run of 90s hits, instead dropping them in among the explosive licks and harder edges of their more recent material.

"I decided to delve into that heavier guitar world," he says, "and it's unleashed a new version of the band. I'll play songs like that over songs that have been Number One because it's not progressive, it's not pushing. I see young people in the crowd thinking: 'I don't know this band, but fuck me!'. It's been a new lease of life for us."

He says that keeping things vital is key.

"I'm fucked now," he says, "because I've given myself to rock music, and if no one really cares about it that much, then you've gotta keep finding ways to make yourself care about it and keep it interesting and keep it away from some homogenised sound that some rock can get. When you say the word 'veteran', the danger is that you make records in a perfunctory way, there's a redundancy to it. I want every song to be bristling with energy."

When he watches Alice In Chains, or listens to System Of A Down or Deftones, he admires how all their songs are pulling from the same sonic template, that there's a thread running through it all. He says he couldn't do that, though. "I've always been too unstable at trying to find different things to unlock the alchemy of music."

You can trace that restless energy right back

"They say divorce and death are the two hardest things to go through, so I'm one down!"

Gavin Rossdale

commercially minded, and probably smarter, I would have continued with a more polished producer to continue in that zone. It's a pretty funny record, because it's just void of any editing. I listen to it now and I'm like: 'Get rid of that bit, for fuck's sake!'"

through his career, he says, offering Bush's second album, *Razorblade Suitcase*, as an example. It's a record that perfectly captures the push and pull at the heart of Bush's success, entering the US *Billboard* chart at No.1 and going Top Five in the UK, while receiving several boots up the arse in

the music press – it scored 2/5 in *Rolling Stone* and 1/10 in *NME*. More than that, though, Rossdale says it's evidence of his bloody-mindedness. "I went straight from having a huge record with *Sixteen Stone* to going to work with Steve Albini," he says of the producer-engineer known for his no-frills, stripped-down approach to recording. "If I had been more

Rossdale revelled in that burst of mid-90s success. "It was fantastic," he recalls. "It just happened so fast, it had been so slow for so long." Before that, he says, he couldn't get arrested. He knew all the A&R men around London, and would see them across the room at venues and think: "There's the bloke who could change my life." The problem was that they didn't know who he was, his musical projects having failed to generate any sort of momentum.

"What's funny is that anyone who doesn't get signed for a long time and believes in themselves feels an endless shovel of disrespect being thrown in your face," he says, laughing. "If you're stupid enough, you just keep going."

When Bush were finally offered a deal with Trauma, a small independent label based in the US, he reasoned that Pixies had to come to England to get a deal, with 4AD, so why couldn't he do the opposite? "I thought, fuck it, let's go there!" For Rossdale it was a period that reinforced the idea of following your gut and believing in something, even if you don't have any cause to.

"It allowed me to lean on my instincts," he states. "It was magic to be accepted and to have



Fully qualified survivor: Gavin Rossdale in 2022.



Ready for lift-off – Bush in '94: (l-r) Dave Parsons, Nigel Pulsford, Gavin Rossdale, Robyn Goodridge.

an audience and to reach a lot of people. I'd been struggling for so long, and it felt like I was in the right suit, like: 'Oh yeah, this is what I was meant to wear all along.'

He thinks that part of the initial UK push-back to his band was down to the fact that Bush emerged around the same time as Britpop was becoming a mainstream cultural crossover. "I was in a rock band with 'grunge' leanings, for lack of a better word, when Suede were the saviours of British music," he says. "I appreciate those Britpop bands, but I just happened to like a certain type of performance, and you can't perform the way I like to perform without a strong guitar backing and feedback and mayhem. A more ordered style never suited how I wanted to be on stage."

"I want to be one of the bands that makes interesting music, where rock is seen as something exciting and modern."

Gavin Rossdale

There have been times in his career when Rossdale has contemplated the diversion he made into writing the hard rock anthems that became Bush's stock-in-trade, and thought to himself: 'Why did I do that?' As a young songwriter, his favourite bands were The Psychedelic Furs, Public Image and The The, none of whom are especially known for distorted chaos. It was when he saw Jane's Addiction perform at the Acklam Hall in West London that everything changed.

"It was the energy on stage, these metal-esque riffs and this powerful music," he marvels. "I loved My Bloody Valentine, but I'd go see them and wasn't blown away by the performance aspect. When I saw Perry [Farrell, Jane's frontman], he was such a showman."

Soon after, a new wave of bands – Tad, Soundgarden, Alice In Chains and Nirvana among them – spoke to him as an artist in a way that none had previously. He could do it too, he thought to himself. "All I'd known of rock music before that was Guns N' Roses and Sunset Strip and hair metal. I thought: 'I can't sing that high and I don't look like that.' But when I heard all those [new]

BEAT AROUND THE BUSH

TEN OF THEIR BEST

EVERYTHING ZEN

The opener of Bush's multimillion-selling debut *Sixteen Stone* couldn't have been a better intro to the quartet, with its mix of disaffected vocals, urgent rhythms and clanging guitars. Minus points for use of 'asshole', though – come on, Gav, you're from West London!

MACHINEHEAD

This single from *Sixteen Stone* was a similarly thrilling introduction in the mid-90s, the hard rock grooves, ascending riffs and anthemic chorus giving the sense of a band in the midst of a meteoric rise. Which they soon would be.

COMEDOWN

Rossdale recalls feeling a sense of liberation when he and original guitarist Nigel Pulsford came up with the demo for the third single from their debut. There's a Led Zep epicness to *Comedown* that gives off a sense that the band's horizons were less being expanded than they were hunted down.

SWALLOWED

The stripped-down calling card of Bush's wiry, grimy second album *Razorblade Suitcase*, where minor-chord mopiness is given a slap by a clattering chorus and Steve Albini's into-the-red production. Did Rossdale mention he loved Pixies' album *Surfer Rosa*? He didn't need to after you heard the screeching guitars on this.

THE CHEMICALS BETWEEN US

Restless Rossdale in action, as the best track and lead single off the band's third album *The Science Of Things* took things down a notch, marrying twisted rock with airy melodies, taut loops and a keyboard part that sounds like a flute.

FUGITIVE

Bush had lost their initial spark by the time they arrived at 2001's *Golden State*, but their fourth album still has some great moments. This mid-paced rocker showed how they'd introduced a little dynamism to their grunge blasts, with the muscular freak-outs punctuated by intricate interplay.

AFTERLIFE

After a decade-long hiatus, the band returned with the widescreen *Afterlife*, a crunching number that regains their early swagger with a yearning chorus and indelible melodies that hark back to their early days.

MAD LOVE

Rossdale was aghast when his record label chose to release a ballad as the lead single from his ill-fated solo album, but he'd obviously made his peace with the format on the standout moment from 2017's *Black And White Rainbows*, Bush's most heartfelt singalong.

BULLET HOLES

Although, saying that, the next thing Rossdale did was completely retool their sound with low bass and industrial-strength riffs. *Bullet Holes* was in the Keanu Reeves film *John Wick 3*, in which he kills people he missed in the first two films. (He must have missed some, though, because there's a fourth instalment on the way.)

MORE THAN MACHINES

The searing, barbed-wire highlight from Bush's new record *The Art Of Survival* continues the sonic themes laid out on *The Kingdom*: all snarling vocals, epic soundscapes and densely layered distortion.





bands, I was like: 'Wow!' That's where my love affair with heavier stuff came in."

The fact that, three decades on, he's on the road with Alice In Chains isn't lost on him. Through a mutual friend he's become close pals with AIC guitarist Jerry Cantrell. "Being on tour with them, hearing *Man In The Box* and realising that in 1991 that was the first one where it was: 'What is this?!' Life is full of weird circles."

As much as *The Art Of Survival* is about the pandemic and the power of people pulling through together, there's also another, deeper and more personal theme running through Bush's new record, one born of break-ups and divorce, of having your name dragged through the mud in tabloids and gossip columns and surviving that. In case you've been living under a rock, or your subscription to *Hello!* magazine has lapsed, Rossdale was married to No Doubt's Gwen Stefani for 13 years until the couple went through an acrimonious split and divorce in 2015. "There was one point a few years ago where I was like: 'I'm married, three kids, I'm falling off a cliff here!' And then you go through a crazy divorce and personal stuff that's on the edge of an abyss. As an artist, it's the most vitalising thing you

can get. It's like I got a shot of adrenaline over a few years. It allows me to have a lot of honesty. It's a very honest record."

Rossdale did ask himself whether he should talk about the split and present *The Art Of Survival* in the light of what he went through, and deemed it not the way to go about things. "It would put too much of a print on something in terms of its genesis," he offers, "and would alter people's experience of it and put too much of me on it."

The problem is that some questions lead right back to that door. As he ponders what the most hurtful thing anyone could say to him is, he returns to the subject. "I went through a manic public divorce where one person gave their version, and I shut my mouth because we've got kids," he says. "Life has moved on, but it was

a really tough time. They say divorce and death are the two hardest things to go through, so I'm one down!"

Looking back on it all, he says he has learned to be more careful and not so blasé about consequences. "It's a personal matter but it got out of hand. I'd been so reckless, so my personal journey was to stop being reckless and sort myself out. Which I did. I slowly came back to myself and wrote this record."

"I decided to delve into that heavier guitar world, and it's unleashed a new version of the band."

Gavin Rossdale

He describes the new album as "strong and resilient and powerful and empathetic". He also says there was a moment during the pandemic when he wondered if he would ever come back again, but has emerged re-energised. Perhaps that's partly due to recognising where he's at in life. He might look good for his age, but there's no getting away from the fact that he's only a few years off 60.

"I appreciate there's a horizon," he says. "The genius of youth is its ignorance. Like: 'I'm always gonna be successful, I'm always gonna be winning awards, I'm always gonna get shit reviews but I'll have massive crowds.' But that's not the case. It's like you're teetering on this precipice the whole time. I made this record on a precipice, fully aware that anyone can knock you off and, unless you're really good, you have no place being there."

If anything, the past few years have hardened Rossdale's resolve not to let all this pass him by. He wants Bush's music to stand out. It's why he keeps tweaking their sound, chasing whatever it is that made him start the band in the first place. "I want to be one of the bands in rock music that makes interesting music," he concludes, "where rock is seen as something exciting and modern. Creatively, in the rock world, we need as many brilliant records as possible. It's not a competition. The competition is with yourself."

Gavin Rossdale knows that a life in music is like being on a carousel. He's patiently waiting to come around again into the light. ●

The Art Of Survival is out now via BMG.

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PAUL HARRIS/PRESS

It's our last Hot List of 2022, and we're closing out with a global swoop from Texas to Lancashire, Sweden to Peterborough and beyond. There's new music from Wolfgang Van Halen (fresh from celebrated appearances at Dave Grohl's Taylor Hawkins tribute shows), The Hot Damn! (the most colourful pop-rock gang in the North West) and a heads-up from The Answer's hotly anticipated comeback record. And a whole eclectic spread of others. It's a damn fine selection of songs, if we say so ourselves.

Until next time ("and there will be a next time," to quote Mr Joe Elliott at the end of every Leppard gig), get your fix of hot-off-the-press rock'n'roll every week at classicrockmagazine.com (including your chance to vote for your favourite in our regular Tracks Of The Week poll).

Devin Townsend *Call Of The Void*

After the more elaborate, experimental sprawls of the rock-come-new age enigma's previous two records – *Empath* (2019) and *The Puzzle* (2021) – *Call Of The Void* feels like a calming, comparatively straight-ahead tonic. Essentially it's a big-hearted pop ballad, framed in gauzy textures and messages of hope, for anyone who's ever felt the pull of dark times. Oh, and definitely watch the video if you could use some emotional rescue remedy: Townsend's use of YouTuber RailCowGirl's train journey footage, through snowy mountains and remote stations, is remarkably soothing. A luscious, beautifully atmospheric appetiser for his new album *Lightwork*, which is out now.

hevydevy.com

Laura Cox

One Big Mess

French guitarist Laura Cox started out on YouTube, wowing her followers with classic rock and bluesy covers. Since then she's struck out further and further as an artist in her own right, and on this latest single – all boot-stomping, rock'n'rolling, hard-boogieing momentum, with flourishes of flashiness – she proves that she's got proper songwriting chops. Find this and more on her new album, *Head Above Water*, which is out on January 20. lauracoxband.com



Sweat Jane

They're a new Swiss-American band from Pittsburgh, but it's all 60s and early 70s British rock sensibilities (both prog and 60s mod vibes) on this tasty debut single, which is shot through with heavy folk lustre and the sort of drive and vocals that would fit right in on a *Barracuda*-era Heart record. If the idea of The Who's *I Can't Explain* revisited by the Wilson sisters appeals, then this is one for you. "It's driving, yet gentle," says singer Sue Pedrazzi. "It is urgent, yet sweet. It is a rocker with depth." She's not wrong. facebook.com/sweatpittsburgh

LAURA COX: LE TURK/PRESS



Austin Gold *Mountain*

The Peterborough rockers' next album, *Those City Lights*, is released on November 4, and if this first slice is anything to go by then the rest will be pretty damn good too. *Mountain* is a banger; a soaring, classy swirl of commanding riffs, sweet melody and expansive keyboards. It's familiar yet rousing stuff, mixing classic 70s oomph with Foo Fighters expanse. If you're already a fan you'll love it (it very much builds on 2017's *Before Dark Clouds* and 2019 mini-album *Austin Gold*). If you're not, get involved. austingold.co.uk



The Hot Damn!

Live Laugh Love

This has been one of our cheer-up songs since the days began to get darker earlier, one of those pop rock bangers that'll have the corners of your mouth twitching upwards in seconds.

"It's a parody of those motivational signs which were very popular in kitchens in the late noughties," singer/guitarist Gill Montgomery says. "There's a lot of doom and gloom in the news, but we want to spread a little cheer."

And spread it they do — thick layers in an ultra-riffy, super-sized cheese sandwich on cheesy bread, with a cheese plate on the side. In a good way. It's as if The Darkness teamed up with Pat Benatar and bonded over Blink 182 hits (and, whisper it, a little McFly-ish). Uncool, uncomplicated, super-effective fun.

thehotdamn.com



Gaupa Moloken

Something witchy and biting now from darkly folky, sharp-edged Swedish rockers Gaupa, to help make the ensuing wintery nights and darker days feel more inviting. A psychedelic microcosm that builds into a heady crescendo of woozy guitars and post-punk weight, this track takes on an otherworldly allure thanks to singer Emma Näslund's strange high vocals. If Bjork ditched the avant-pop, listened to a load of early Sabbath and Jesus And Mary Chain records and started a new band, it might sound like this. Find this and more on Gaupa's second album, *Myriad*, which is out on November 18.

gaupaband.com

Mammoth WVH

As Long As You're Not You

Wondering who's following in Foo Fighters' footsteps? Musically, at least, it could be this guy. Following the release of 2021's Mammoth WVH's self-titled debut (No.2 in our Top 50 albums of last year), Wolfgang Van Halen was bang-on when he said he had more material in the can.

As Long As You're Not You starts out with a riff that makes us think a bit of Green Day's *American Idiot*, but deeper and less sugary. From there it grows into a richly melodic mix of grunge, angst and energy, without losing that opening spirit of fun. The real deal.

mammothwvh.com



Austin Meade *Rosé Romance*

From an incisive storyteller with Tom Petty and ZZ Top running through his veins, Austin Meade's smart, contemporary brand of Americana-meets-blue-collar rock flourishes in style on *Rosé Romance*, the third instalment of a trilogy within his new album *Abstract Art Of An Unstable Mind*.

"At this point we have seen the characters go from late teens into early adulthood, illustrating character growth as life becomes more complicated," Meade explains. "My musical development has continued to expand with the storylines."

austinmeade.com



And keep an ear out for... The Answer

It's been six years since Northern Ireland's new-wave classic rock frontrunners last released new music, the excellent – and in our minds a little underrated – *Solas* album. During that time, frontman Cormac Neeson released his gorgeous solo record *White Feather*, but otherwise all's been quiet on the Answer recording front. Until now.

In March 2023 they're set to release a brand-new album, alongside a series of launch shows in the UK and Europe. For now, however, they've released oomphy first single *Blood Brother*, a chunky, stompy marriage of *Rise*-era gusto and the richness of Cormac's bluesy roots and singer-songwriter chops. Welcome back, chaps.

theanswerrock.com

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EDITED BY IAN FORTNAM

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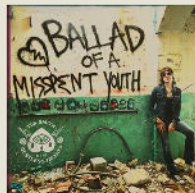
THE HARD STUFF ALBUMS



Tuk Smith & The Restless Hearts

Ballad Of A Misspent Youth MRG

Former Biters frontman returns with sparkling sort-of-solo debut album.



It's a small miracle that *Ballad Of A Misspent Youth* has come into the world. After Tuk Smith's previous band, Atlanta punk'n'roll heroes Biters, fizzled out in 2019, worn down by the apathy of a public oblivious to their brilliance, Smith recorded an album for US label Better Noise, home of Mötley Crüe and The Hu, only to have it shelved mid-pandemic due to behind-the-scenes shenanigans. No one would have blamed him if he'd walked away from the whole shit-show. But he didn't, and thank the gods of rock'n'roll for that.

Short, sweet and crammed with maximum tuneage, *Ballad Of A Misspent Youth* is a love letter to the intoxicating power of music. The lack of success Smith achieved with Biters is in inverse proportion to the undiluted greatness of his songwriting. The gleaming melodies of the title track and *Shadows On The Street* feel like they've been unearthed from some great lost album released some time between Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers' first album and Cheap Trick's *In Color*.

Smith is in love with the myths and heroes of rock'n'roll, and this album bears traces of Petty, Bruce Springsteen, Bob Seger, Big Star and Thin Lizzy in its DNA. The spiralling *Girls On The East Side Of Town*

is a glorious Thin Lizzy homage, relocating their freewheeling Celtic spirit to smalltown America and making the connection between Phil Lynott and Springsteen as kindred spirits separated by an ocean. Tellingly, the punk influences that were evident in Biters' music have been dialled back. *Ain't For The Faint*, with its glam-powered riff and stacked backing vocals, is a solid-gold radio rock hit – or it would be if there were any radio stations left that would play it.

The album title itself is misleading. *Ballad Of A Misspent Youth* may seem to celebrate the romance of rebellion, but Smith has seen the dark side of the business, and a cautionary undercurrent swims beneath these uplifting songs. *Say Goodbye*'s stirring melody can't quite mask its fatalism: 'Say goodbye to the world tonight,' he sings, aware that the lifestyle can be as sad and damaging as it is celebratory. *Everyone Loves You When You're Dead* is even more explicit: this is Smith's ode to fallen friends and idols. Yet even in its most reflective moments *Ballad Of A Misspent Youth* is never less than exhilarating. Just the way rock'n'roll should be.



Dave Everley

Mother Vulture

Mother Knows Best

LOCKDOWN

Turbo-charged debut from livewire British blues-punks.



Capturing in the studio the energy of an electrifying live show has

stymied so many new bands, but West Country fireballs Mother Vulture have managed to bottle their wild-eyed vitality on debut album *Mother Knows Best*. That rotten title does them no favours, though. Its 12 tracks rush by in a blur of noise and nailed-on groove, while charisma-bomb frontman Georgi Valentine's upper-register screech can strip paint and dislodge earwax at 50 feet.

It's blues, it's punk, it's alt-rock, but it never feels like they're trying to stick the head of a horse on the body of a camel. *Fame Or Shame* and the bonehead beat of *Big Bad* crackle like a 10,000-volt charge running through an uninsulated cable. Yet while their desire to batter anyone who comes within 10 feet into submission is admirable, blockbusting choruses are in shorter supply – it's perfect club fodder, but there's nothing here that will get an arena crowd going. Solve that problem and then we're talking.



Dave Everley

Threshold

Dividing Lines NUCLEAR BLAST

Album number 12 from British prog-metal veterans.



It must have been absolutely gutting for this band to have had the plug

pulled on the promo campaign for 2017's well-received and sweepingly epic *Legends Of The Shires*, due to the pandemic. But you don't cultivate a 30-plus-year career without being a little bit indestructible.

Described by the band as *Legends'* darker and moodier elder brother, *Dividing Lines* isn't as loaded with songs or quite as long, but doesn't hold back on the prog or the metal, demonstrating that Threshold's well of creativity is impressively deep and not about to run dry. Songs such as *Run*, *Haunted* and *Complex* are relatively tight and economical, with typical touches of technical brilliance, while the real meat is the two labyrinthine juggernauts *The Domino Effect* and *Defence Condition*. There's

plenty of choppy metallic aggression, and some moments of real majestic beauty, and altogether it's a worthy follow-up to *Legend*.



Essi Berelian

Tyler Bryant & The Shakedown

Shake The Roots RATTLE SHAKE

Scaled back, independent, blues howl from Bryant's new trio.



Perennial support act (on some of the world's biggest stages), guitar

wunderkind and soulful singer. Tyler Bryant has wasted little time making his mark. This, the band's fifth album, is a left that feels right; the band stripped back to a trio, sepia tint album cover (that screams more serious artist than louche hard rockers), and a live-in-the-studio, blues and folk shuffle feel makes *Shake The Roots* something of a standout for Bryant and his band.

Released independently on their own label means this is something of a starter pistol for what the Shakedown do next. Which occasionally means they do get into a studio jam that an A&R man might frown at (*Shackles*), but elsewhere their instincts are razor-sharp and their songwriting likewise: the bounce of *Bare Bones*, the grinding *Ghost rider* and the lilting *Good Thing* are all illustrative of a band not afraid to kick new ideas around and keep moving towards the horizon.

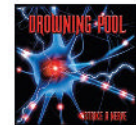


Philip Wilding

Drowning Pool

Strike A Nerve T-BONY/UMC

Mardy Texans tread water on album number seven.



We've all banged our heads to nu-metal floor-filler *Bodies* on a club night (don't deny it), but the thought of sitting through another Drowning Pool album in 2022 inspires more hope than expectation.

Six years on from *Hallelujah*, the Texan wrestle-metallers arrive at *Strike A Nerve*, album number seven, with more angsty bilge. Three quarters of the band remain since they formed. It's singers they've had less luck with, and their fourth, Jasen Moreno, is the weakest link here. Guitarist CJ Pierce's

siney riffs barge through *Hate Against Hate* and *Stay And Bleed* well enough, but Moreno's laboured, cartoonish vocals cheapen things. He yaps through the hulking *A Devil More Damned* with all the indignation of a grounded pre-teen, and the lyrics to *Racing To A Red Light* are staggeringly bad: 'I'm feeling alright, racing to a red light, chasing my best life.' More staggering is that people still listen to this stuff voluntarily.



Chris Lord

Cardinal Black

January Came Close JUMP IN

Compelling Cardiff collective have lift-off with sublime debut album.



A year ago, Cardinal Black guitarist Chris Buck told this magazine that

the fledgling band's best was yet to come. *January Came Close* is either a promise well-kept or the dawn of something remarkable.

This, the Welshmen's first album, is an unequivocal labour of love, combining rock and soul-soaked blues to magnificent effect, introducing singer Tom Hollister and the award-winning, Slash-approved Buck as world-class talents. The lush *Terra Firma* glides gently with Buck's resplendent guitar playing, often favouring feel over fire. *Where Do You Go?* is more

of a canter, in which Hollister's rich vocals soar throughout. *Jump In* and *Warm Love* entrance with more of Buck's unworldly invention. Penultimate track *I'm Ready* lunges from sonorous ballad to playful blues jam in four fantastic minutes. Like a warm embrace, these spectacular songs envelop the listener from start to finish. Debut albums seldom sound so impeccably assured.



Chris Lord

Leatherwolf

Kill The Hunted N.I.L.B

Old-school veterans revamped and reborn.



Primed for greatness after the release of their self-titled Island Records

debut in 1987, Leatherwolf never quite hit the commercial heights that their thunderous sound deserved. They initially split in 1991, but drummer Dean Roberts took the reins with a new line-up in 1999 and has kept the show on the road ever since.

Kill The Hunted arrives 15 years after the last Leatherwolf record, *New World Asylum*, and feels like a significant reboot. New vocalist Keith Adamiak is a snarling, shrieking powerhouse, and the songs here are as catchy and explosive as anything on the band's early classics. This is unapologetic old-school

melodic metal, but sonically pristine and brimming with swagger and snot. From short, sharp headbangers like *Nobody* and *Madhouse*, to the epic, prog-metal clangour of *Hit The Dirt* and *The Henchman*, Roberts's crew still sound too good to be languishing in obscurity.

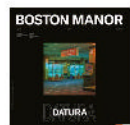


Dom Lawson

Boston Manor

Datura SHARP TONE

Down and out in Blackpool.



Despite appearances, you can't really classify Boston Manor as

punks; they've put too much care and effort into building the desolate vision that runs through *Datura*, their fourth album, mainly through an undercurrent of atmospheres and sound effects that underlies their grunge-laden music.

The image they conjure up on the opening title track is of their home town Blackpool on a wet night out of season. It's also one they portray visually on the video for their *Passenger* single. Think George Orwell's 1984 but without Big Brother as a rallying call to rise up against, which makes the picture bleaker still. Resistance just seems futile. Plus the singer has girlfriend trouble, which really doesn't help. The final *Inertia* offers a chink of redemption, but even that is

snuffed out in a final noise cacophony, repeated after a short pause to reinforce the misery. Sign. Of. The. Times.

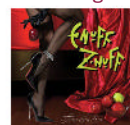


Hugh Fielder

Enuff Z'Nuff

Finer Than Sin FRONTIERS

Still getting high on a slightly older thing.



Having now reached the seventeenth studio album of an almost

four-decade career, Enuff Z'Nuff have done remarkably well to survive without co-founding lead singer Donnie Vie, who quit as long ago as 2013. When guitarist Johnny Monaco picked up the slack before leaving, the role of frontman fell to bass player Chip Z'Nuff, who seems surprisingly well-suited to the position. Four records later, the Chicago band's haphazard career shows no immediate sign of hitting the canvas.

Starting where he means to continue, Chip Z'Nuff alludes to crack, cocaine and LSD on opening song proper *Catastrophe* (*Sound Check* being a short instrumental), while *Steal The Light*, *Intoxicated* and *Temporarily Disconnected* sound reassuringly like Enuff Z'Nuff, with obligatory nods to Cheap Trick and The Beatles.

The days of major labels and hit singles are long behind Enuff

Z'Nuff, but after a pint or five they can still get us up and dancing on the table.

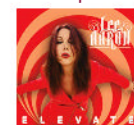


Dave Ling

Lee Aaron

Elevate METALVILLE

Canadian 'Metal Queen' gets a fresh polish.



After dalliances with jazz at the start of this century, Lee Aaron now

continues in the rock vein with which she launched her career 40 years ago. Well, almost.

Not far into opener *Rock Bottom Revolution* you begin to hope that she missed the memo that suggested artists put the album's best track first. The next song has you worried that she *did*. *The Devil U Know* gets things back on a rockier track, but really these 10 songs are underwhelming at best.

It sounds crisp and clear (no doubt thanks to Mike Fraser's role as recording and mix engineer), but it's all way too poppy, pedestrian and lyrically puerile. On the plus side, Aaron's voice is still good, and easily strong enough to carry a tune – witness the soppy ballad *Red Dress*. The problem is *writing* a song that can be passed off as anything other than a pop song in leather trousers.



Neil Jeffries

ROUND-UP: MELODIC ROCK

By Dave Ling

Chez Kane: an album that fizzles with vivacity.



Chez Kane

Powerzone FRONTIERS



Powerzone is the follow-up to the self-titled debut from the Welsh singer who along with her two sisters fronts the band

Kane'd. With the help of Crazy Lixx singer Danny Rixon, the album's writer, arranger and producer, Chez Kane rocketed on to the scene, finding her way on to many 'best of 2021' lists. Her more vociferous followers dismissed yours truly as miserly for awarding that record a mere seven out of 10, but its considerable strengths were diluted by a handful of filler tracks.

Once again masterminded by the Swede Rixon, *Powerzone* had to be more consistent. And it is – although, being super-picky, room for improvement remains. It's delivered with warmth and skill, and Kane still sounds like she can't believe her good luck. Its 10 tracks fizz with vivacity. Highlights include a lighter-waving *Nationwide*, the slightly Leppard-esque bump and grind of *Rock You Up*, and *Love Gone Wild*, possibly her best tune so far, powered by generous helpings of saxophone and topped off by a lead vocal to die for.

If you miss the days of Vixen, Pat Benatar and Lee Aaron, give *Powerzone* a try.



Turkish Delight

Volume One ESCAPE MUSIC



It's quicker to list which melodic rock stars *don't* appear on this painstakingly compiled love letter

to the genre, curated by Escape Music co-owner and scene guru Khalil Turk, than the ones that do. Full of marvellously catchy songs played and sung by musicians of the highest calibre, all plucked from Turk's little black book, *Volume One* is a real sweet treat.



White Skies

Black Tide PRIDE & JOY MUSIC



Formed just before lockdown by former Samson vocalist Mick White and ex-Ya Ya guitarist Ray Callcut,

in celebration of the classic AOR of yesteryear, White Skies have conjured up an entertaining debut album. That White sings the lines: 'There was a time when I'd move the Earth to please you, but you were playing the dealer's hand' confirms its attention to detail.



About Us

About Us FRONTIERS



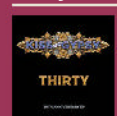
Based on the fact that their six members come from differing genres, Frontiers cite About Us as a band

with a "non-traditional" approach to melodic rock. Hmm, not sure about that. Far more remarkable is that the band's homeland is Nagaland, in India. From *Gimme Gimme's* bounce to the smoothness of *Loaded Love*, About Us certainly show potential at what they do.



Kiss Of The Gypsy

Thirty EP KISSOFTHEGYPSY.CO.UK



Three new songs pulled together by four-fifths of the Lancastrian band's original line-up to

celebrate a 30th anniversary of their solitary album, released via Atlantic Records. With vocalist Chris Clancy replacing Tony Mitchell, KOTG 2.0 tap back into the past with ease yet administer a fresh modern spin. Let's have an album soon, please, fellas.

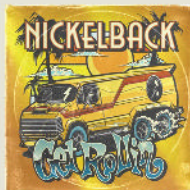




Nickelback

Get Rollin' BMG

Album number 10 is the sound of a band playing to their strengths.



Tricky business, Nickelback. Who could not admire them? After 10 albums, the Canadian band undoubtedly remain a commercial powerhouse, although their claims to be the second-best-selling foreign act in the US (behind The Beatles) may interest fans of Elton John, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin etc. They've had the same line-up since 2005's *All The Right Reasons*. They've stayed the course with a succession of rip-roaring albums. They've long established their own sound: Herculean anthems propelled by Chad Kroeger's mighty rasp of a voice. And they don't do curve balls.

Yet Nickelback are difficult to love. Kroeger has never gone out of his way to be liked. And on a musical level, no curve balls means few chances are taken; perhaps over the course of 10 albums a band who claim to be the eleventh best-selling act of all time might have developed their sound more. After all, there are tracks on *Get Rollin'* (Steel Still Rusts especially) that wouldn't have sounded out of place on the their 1996 debut *Curb*.

But that's to miss the point entirely. More crucially, it's to miss just what a thrill *Get Rollin'* is, from the moment opener *San Quentin* kicks in with Daniel Adair's whiplash drums, a guitar buzz from the Nine Inch Nails playbook and

Kroeger growling his outlaw's tale ('*Get me the hell out of San Quentin...*'). By the time *Just One More* closes proceedings with Kroeger intoning the song's title against an almighty and mightily complex swirl, the album has ticked all the boxes worth ticking.

Unusually, and revealingly, there was no gnashing of Nickelback teeth when lockdown halted everyone. Instead they used the absence of deadlines to knuckle down to crafting an album that Kroeger, correctly, states is "loaded with rock". But – of course, there's no contradiction here – it's also loaded with sizzling, fist-pumpingly cathartic songs. Along the way there's the impossibly catchy *Skinny Little Missy*, which deserves more than its wretched title; the elegiac *Those Days*; the glacial change of pace that is *Tidal Wave*; *High Time*, which seems to open with a joint being lit; and the magical opening to *Horizon*.

Nickelback are not reinventing the wheel here. That's not them. But why on earth should they? As with their nine albums before it, *Get Rollin'* is crafted to satisfy their fan base rather than to pick up new but casual admirers. And they've succeeded completely. Perhaps Nickelback aren't such a tricky business after all.



John Aizlewood

LS Dunes

Past Lives FANTASY

Leading lights of the East Coast post-hardcore family come together for a blistering musical union.



The Venn diagram pinpointing the spot where East Coast post-

hardcore meets middle-of-the-road Irish pop is infinitesimally small, but LS Dunes have found it on *Like Forever*, a track that, like Ronan Keating, says "you say it best when you say nothing at all". Mercifully, this is where the comparison begins and ends, because this lockdown-born band comprising members of My Chemical Romance, Circa Survive, Coheed And Cambria and Thursday is very much a sum of its parts, a celebration of where they come from and where they belong.

Circa Survive's Anthony Green always sounds like his voice, high and melancholy, is rising up from a deep void, which is accentuated by the punk battering from the Thursday songbook and tough theatricality of MCR. *Past Lives* is a wifully uncommercial record, made for the sheer love of the tight-knit scene that spawned them, which makes the dreamy 50s doo-wop pop (albeit with a pitch-black heart) of closing track *Sleep Cult* all the more affecting and unsettling.



Emma Johnston

Austin Meade

Abstract Art Of An Unstable Mind SNAKEFARM

Second album from the Texan up-and-comer is big on ambition and low on subtlety.



Austin Meade – a man with a name as straight-up Texan as guns,

God and guacamole – is still pretty new to the world stage, yet this second album displays the strutting confidence of someone who's been playing to thousands for decades.

There is a lot of ambition and a clear appetite for fame on display here, with *Late Night Letdown* in particular begging for crossover success with its rolling melody, cheesy acted-out phone conversations and clap-along ending.

The touch points range from Queens Of The Stone Age in the brash spoof radio inserts, and Pearl Jam in Meade's deep,

post-Vedder vocal tremble, while *Violation Delight*, with its howling classic-rock solo and all-round-the-mic vocal harmonies, is almost enviable in its lack of subtlety. But while those bands are steeped in authenticity, Meade has no such qualms – this is pop in CSN&Y's clothing (and facial hair), a thoroughly millennial idea of 70s North American rock'n'roll. It's perfectly pitched for US rock radio airplay, but whether it translates beyond those borders remains to be seen.

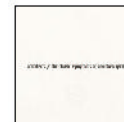


Emma Johnston

Architects

The Classic Symptoms Of A Broken Spirit EPITAPH

Chart-topping metalcore monsters return with extra arena-sized swagger.



Building on the next-level momentum of their 2021 chart topper

For Those That Wish To Exist, Brighton metalcore icons Architects crank up the cinematic melodrama to 11 again on this sumptuous, huge-sounding tenth album.

The song titles – *Living Is Killing Us*, *Doomscrolling*, *Born Again Pessimist* – and lyrics may scream apocalyptic gloom, but there is an increasingly bright, infectious, power-glam polish to the band's sound. A deep seam of goth-pop melody also runs through these fire-breathing anthems, from the Muse-style supercharged paranoia of *Deep Fake* to the arena-stomping electro-goth of *A New Moral Low Ground*, and the thunderous riff stampede of *Tear Gas* that sounds like The Prodigy blow-torching a busload of boy bands. For their final flourish, these hardcore veterans nod to their roots with the hurtling screampunk blast of *Be Very Afraid* before fading out on a fragrant flurry of birdsong. After so much darkness, this airy dawn chorus strikes a pleasingly poetic, cautiously upbeat note.



Stephen Dalton

Sendelica

One Man's Man... FRUITS DE MER

Primate investigations.



As a dyed-in-the-wool *Classic Rock* reader, you will more than likely

remember the label design on

vinyl releases by Bronze Records, longtime home to Uriah Heep: comprised of a series of illustrations, grouped in an evolutionary circle around the spindle hole, the label cleverly depicted how modern man developed from the humble ape. Prolific Welsh space-psyche mercenaries Sendelica have taken this theme to heart on *One Man's Man...*, redefining the term 'fossil rock' in the process.

The album begins in the distant, knuckle-scraping past with the suitably primordial *The Dawn Of Man - Homo Habilis*, then the band hit their stride with *Homo Rudolfness* - very Hawkwind, very Paul Rudolph, very reminiscent of (obscure reference alert) Finnish monotony merchants Pharaoh Overlord. Then come *Homo Erectus*, a backwards-sounding, free-form freak-out; the pomp-doom *Denisovans*; and *Neanderthal*, seemingly a psychotic reworking of Gerry Rafferty's *Baker Street* and characterised by saxophonist Lee Relfe's parptastic noodling.

As you can probably tell by now, this all-instrumental record is not for the faint-hearted, with final track *Future Man - Homo Superior* pointing to a dystopian mutant future.

Give me Early Palaeozoic Era any day of the week.



Geoff Barton

Black Space Riders

We Have Been Here Before

CARGO

Let's get real gone for a change.



Over the years, Germanic star-streakers Black Space Riders

have slowly and methodically evolved from laser-blasting stoner rock warriors to post-punky prog-metal explorers willing to wander wherever their muse leads them.

We Have Been Here Before is the band's seventh album and definitely their most adventurous. Certainly there are moments that hark back to the band's bombastic salad days: AAAAAA AAAAARRRRR RGGGH is a wallop of dope-metal guitars and acid-tongued grunge; *Leaving The Hill* is pleasantly woozy space rock; *Worlds Collide Dans Ma Tete* is all amps-to-11 crunch. So it rocks when it has to. But most of the album is dedicated to more nuanced sounds. The smooth, haunting *This Flow* is reminiscent of Ian Astbury's down-tempo electronica period (remember that?); *Trapped In An Endless Loop* is part alt-metal, part spazzy new wave; bracing single *Fear No More* is sorta like The Polyphonic Spree in space. You get the idea. It's out there, man.



Sleazegrinder

Todd Rundgren

Space Force CLEOPATRA

World in shock as Todd makes weird album.



Spending your career dressed like a butterfly and also providing hair

inspiration for Billie Eilish suggests someone with varied musical inspiration. The result is a smorgasbord of collaborations that makes the inside of Todd Rundgren's head seem like some kind of insane fairground run by the characters from the film *Labyrinth*.

Complex bass lines underlay the synthesised, airy reverb of *Puzzle* and *Head In The Ocean*, broken up by the four-minute farmhouse trip that is *Your Fandango*. Weezer's Rivers Cuomo guests on buoyant ska track *Down With The Ship*, which is followed by yacht-rock sugar rush *Godiva Girl*. Cheap Trick guitarist Rick Nielsen helps Rundgren blow off some steam during *STFU*, and Steve Vai closes the album, articulating his reverence for female mysticism through the medium of shredding.

Rundgren is possibly the only musician for whom a lack of any thematic coherency across a record doesn't result in disaster. *Space Force* works, but don't ask me how.

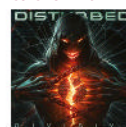


Phoebe Flyn

Disturbed

Divisive REPRISE

Chicagoans roll back evolution to their nu-metal heyday.



After their cover of Simon & Garfunkel's classic *The Sound Of Silence*

went supernova, you can't really blame Disturbed for devoting album space to trying to replicate its success with grandiose ballads. But if you've been yearning for the days when David Draiman shrieked like a nu-metal chimpanzee-cum-wolverine, then *Divisive* is the album for you.

It throws back to the punchy, anthemic approach of *10,000 Fists*, each song powered by the twin engines of a leviathan stomp and Draiman's massive vocal talents. Almost every track is a fist-in-the-air rager, with powerhouse choruses making *Hey You, Bad Man, Unstoppable, Love To Hate* and *Won't Back Down* feel like insta-classics. *Don't Tell Me*, the album's apparently contractually obliged ballad, even brings in fellow powerhouse vocalist Ann Wilson for an epic duet with shades of post-millennial gothic romanticism à la Evanescence. And if that bores you, Draiman breaks out a 'wa-aa-aa-ow' on *Part Of Me*, heading right back to that nu-metal sweet spot.



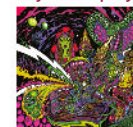
Rich Hobson

Tropical Gothclub

Tropical Gothclub

THIRD MAN

Psychedelic side project from QOTSA and Dead Weather keyboard player/guitarist.



Literal-minded listeners

expecting the new project from Dean

Fertita to sound like an unlikely alchemy of Jimmy Buffet and Bauhaus will be disappointed from the off, but approach *Tropical Gothclub* with an open mind and you may find it opened further.

Standout track *Double Blind* - a deliciously trippy ramble through Flaming Lips territory via a detour into Pink Floyd's *Fearless* - might loom head and shoulders above the rest, but there's plenty to get the serotonin spiking. *Where Is The Water* twists and meanders hazily before shifting into gear with a riff from the Jack White school of thud, while *Needles* is excitable garage rock with a stiff, post-punk edge. Over in the kaleidoscopic corner, *Wheels Within Wheels* flips merrily from one psychedelic territory to the next, and includes a wriggling organ solo that sounds as if it's being squeezed from a tube.

All in all, *Tropical Gothclub* is quite the adventure.



Fraser Lewry

ROUND-UP: BLUES

By Henry Yates

Joanne Shaw Taylor

Nobody's Fool KTBA



After a covers album and a live record, *Nobody's Fool* should quell any fears that JST has forgotten how to write 'em. And whether you put it down to inspiration or ambition, her songcraft has never flirted so hard with the mainstream.

The route-one chunk of *Then There's You* is the only thing here tooled for a Dutch blues fest. Elsewhere the honky-tonk title track could be Sheryl Crow with a vocal pitched a few fathoms deeper. With a chimed lick pirouetting throughout, *Won't Be Fooled Again* feels distinctly mid-period Mac (see also the burbling, sugar-sweet *Runaway*). Venomous breakup ballad *Bad Blood* sounds like surf music, slowed down and embittered.

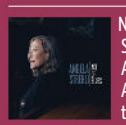
Hooks seem like her priority, with *Just No Getting Over You's* horn lick cycling almost indefinitely with no complaints, while effervescent closer *New Love* bounces like The Supremes on Prozac. But it's the more abrasive *Figure It Out* that emerges as the pick - a tough, wiry drag-race rocker with Taylor and Bones UK's Carmen Vandenberg smashing away at the guitars. Her best album yet?



Angela Strehli

Ace Of Blues

ANTONE'S/NEW WEST



Now 76, Texan Angela Strehli co-founded Austin's iconic Antone's club, where the greats walked the boards. Seventeen years after she last recorded, these songs remind us of the other side of her talent, draping a voice like gilt-edged parchment over stately standards like Muddy's *I Live The Life I Love*. 'Ace Of Blues' is right.



Sunjay

Black & Blues Revisited

MIGHTY TIGHT

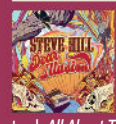


Sunjay Brain has always had the blues spirit under his fingernails. On this fantastic covers set, roll-and-tumble readings of *Statesboro Blues* and *Key To The Highway* have rarely sounded more like a man outrunning his circumstances, while the musically sunkissed *Come Back Baby* belies the valedictory sigh of the lyrics.



Steve Hill

Dear Illusion NO LABEL



Toasting his 25th year in business, the Canadian bluesman doesn't mess about on *Dear Illusion*: opening track *All About The Love*, with its riotous Mariachi brass hook courtesy of the Devil Horns, is one of the year's most thrilling moments. He comes close to topping it, too, with *Don't Let The Truth Get In The Way (Of A Good Story)*, which borrows Jimmy Page's guitar jangle from *Stairway*.



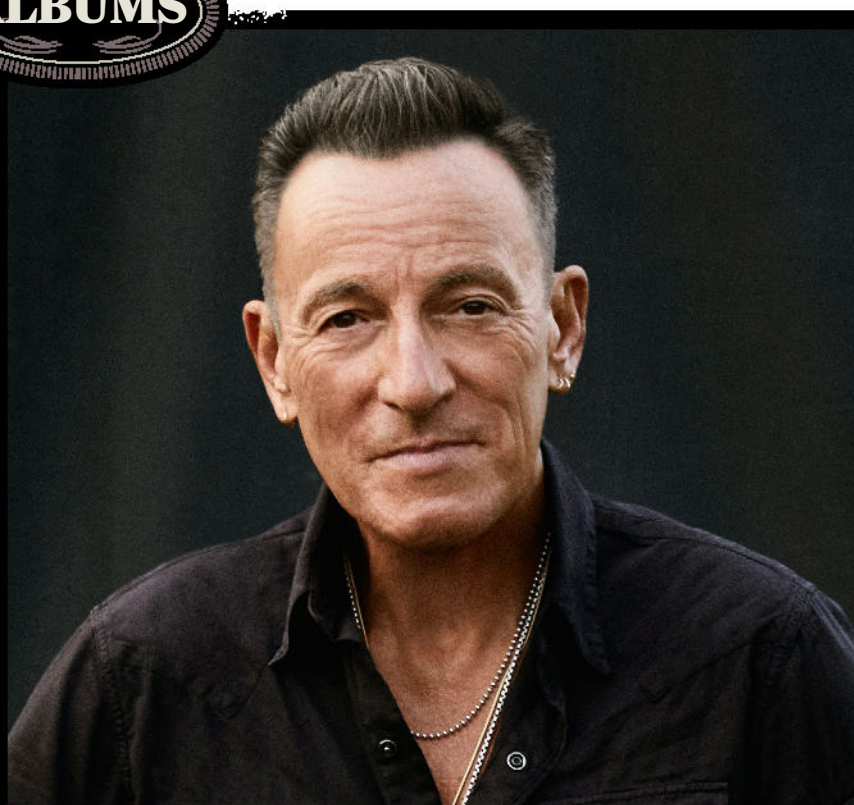
Gerry Jablonski & The Electric Band

105 SELF-RELEASED



These Scots skipped into the studio last February as news broke of that morning's Russian invasion. With their antennae up, *105* is a dark, heavy and highly impressive fifth, with *Hard Road's* eerie slow-build attack on Putin's war spilling into assorted cataclysms ranging from the tanking economy to the burning planet.





Bruce Springsteen

Only The Strong Survive COLUMBIA

Cover me: Bruce cranks up his soul-man jukebox, with mixed results.



Springsteen has said he wanted to do an album where he “just sang”, and to do justice to the great American songbook of the 60s and 70s. The book he’s reading eulogises the soul classicism of Stax, Motown and Gamble-Huff, so this love letter to his youth stands in contrast to his only previous covers album, 2006’s Pete Seeger tribute. Within the big, serious-faced picture of Bruce’s significant career, it probably counts as a mere divertissement, a fun frolic. That said, it’s feasible its coffee-shop tastefulness could fluke humongous sales in the manner of, say, Rod Stewart’s karaoke sets.

Like most covers collections, it’s hit-and-miss. Obviously Springsteen’s having a great time, and loves the songs. Black music matters. And his musicians, including the E Street Horns and guest vocalist Sam Moore, cut it. But does he bring anything new to these remarkable standards? Only his committed voice, which rises to the undeniable urgency of The Four Tops’ *7 Rooms Of Gloom* and Frank Wilson’s northern soul banger *Do I Love You (Indeed I Do)*. Yet sometimes his boom and gusto upset the delicate poise of a beauty like The Supremes’ *Someday We’ll Be Together*, which always transmitted its emotion with finely honed understatement and allowed Diana Ross’s quiet, quivering ad libs to hint, not holler, about the hurt. Tackling

an Aretha Franklin hit also has risks, and on *Don’t Play That Song* he wisely avoids competing, but ends up treading water. *What Becomes Of The Brokenhearted* replicates Jimmy Ruffin’s original, conceding only a slight, respectful leeway for Bruce to decorate over its ending.

More Boss-like proprietorial presence can be found on The Temptations’ *I Wish It Would Rain*, but even so it shows less strutting flair than the Faces’ 1973 take. Similarly, his glide through The Commodores’ *Nightshift* is perfectly pleasant but doesn’t match the shuffling guile of Dexys’ deft delivery of the song, which inhabited more than imitated. And what can you do with *The Sun Ain’t Gonna Shine Anymore* that the Walker Brothers didn’t already? Again, Springsteen seems unsure whether to stick or twist, to copy with due reverence or to try different inflections because one’s expected to. He finds more traction with the Jerry Butler numbers, loosening his shackles on the title track.

There are many less rewarding experiences than hearing Springsteen thirstily sing his favourite songs, but there’s a sense here that all concerned hope it would catch fire and amount to something more.

★★★★★

Chris Roberts

Candlemass

Sweet Evil Sun NAPALM

Sweden’s kings of doom keep it morbid.



Reliable providers of epic doom metal since way back in

1984, Candlemass have been through multiple line-up changes over the years, but founder Leif Edling’s singular vision has never wavered. The return of original vocalist Johan Langqvist in 2018 gave the Swedes yet another new lease of life, and the following year’s *The Door To Doom* was easily their finest album since the glory days of *Nightfall* and *Epicus Doomicus Metallicus*.

Much is expected of *Sweet Evil Sun*, then. And it doesn’t disappoint. With Edling’s riff machine set to relentless, and Langqvist channelling his inner demon priest throughout, the thirteenth Candlemass album is another tour-de-force of post-lomman purity. *Wizard Of The Vortex* and *When Death Sighs* are momentous, morbid sprawls; *Scandinavian Gods* is grinding, ghoulish singalong; *Goddess* is an unspeakably heavy exercise in theatrical macabre. All of it sounds like a fitting soundtrack to humanity’s looming endgame, but with extra riffs.

★★★★★

Dom Lawson

Spell

Tragic Magic BAD OMEN

Occult rockers smarten up and trip out.



Spell have been on quite the journey since their primitive but promising

debut *The Full Moon Sessions*, released eight years ago. From the start, fourth album *Tragic Magic* showcases a more evolved and sophisticated take on the Vancouver duo’s psych-fuelled blend of hard rock and old-school metal.

It’s wildly imaginative songwriting that makes the difference here, as *Spell* strip back some of the all-out riff worship and focus on melodic impact and the element of surprise. Like *Ghost* before tongue was permanently sewn into cheek, *Fever Dream* weaves incisive power-pop into a melee of acid-rock thundering. Similarly, *Watcher Of The Seas* is an exquisite and timeless prog rocker that highlights *Spell*’s newfound restraint and winning

way with an extended guitar solo. Weirdly, and in the best possible way, *Cruel Optimism* sounds like a doomy, psych-rock Dokken. Bursting with great ideas and eccentricity, *Tragic Magic* is pure wizardry.

★★★★★

Dom Lawson

Sun King Rising

Signs & Wonders

PEACOCK RISING

Making them so very happy.



John Blangero put his burgeoning career as a pianist/

singer-songwriter aside some time in the 70s and became an acclaimed genetic scientist. Now he has returned to music under the name Sun King Rising.

He calls his style “the new wave of southern rock and soul music” although his contemporaries will probably find familiarities with late-60s big bands like Blood Sweat & Tears and Chicago. But the sophisticated arrangements and literary lyrics on this second album give his songs a distinctive character that grows on you after several listens, just like albums did back in the 70s. But that was then. These days an instant hit is required, a flash of inspiration like a *Walking In Memphis*, and there is no obvious candidate on this record.

Meanwhile a rewarding club career beckons for an audience who are happy to go home with the warm glow of an evening well spent.

★★★★★

Hugh Fielder

Autograph

Beyond FRONTIERS S.R.L.

Reanimated hair-metallers bid farewell to a founder member.



Autograph’s Randy Rand must have had a strong inkling that he wasn’t

long for this world. Because not long before his death from a long-standing heart condition in April this year, the bassist told his bandmates that if anything were to happen to him, he wanted the second full-length album the band recorded since their 2013 reunion to be released regardless.

As swansongs go, *Beyond* is a lively final statement. The likes of *This Ain’t The Place I Wanna Be* and shoutalong stormer *Run For Your Life* benefit from winning

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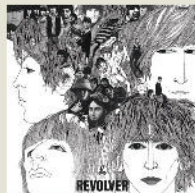
THE HARD STUFF REISSUES



The Beatles

Revolver (Special Deluxe Edition) APPLE CORPS/CAPITOL/UME

Quad vinyl/four CD/7" EP bells-and-whistles re-box of Fab Four zenith.



Characterised by Paul McCartney as the album “where we all became individuals”, 1966’s *Revolver* marked the point at which The Beatles resigned themselves to the fact that the only environment within which they could truly grow as artists and explore the possibilities of their collective artistic vision was in the recording studio. The band played their last ever live show within a month of its release. It marked the end of an era; the days of one-night scream-ups and soaked cinema seats were behind them. Psychedelics had opened their minds, and rapidly advancing studio technology brought them the tools to turn on an entire generation, to expand pop consciousness toward rock and ultimately to redefine the very meaning of the word ‘progressive’.

To say the release of this widescreen redux of *Revolver* has been keenly anticipated is an understatement, yet it was believed (even by the man himself) that Giles Martin would not be in a position to provide the full remix magic he’d previously performed on the multi-track recordings of the White Album and *Abbey Road* because *Revolver* had been recorded on four-track, so the guitar, bass and drums all shared the same track. Miraculously, however, using next-generation tech, Peter Jackson’s team in New Zealand found a way to isolate each instrument, even

taking apart the elements of Ringo’s kit, so they could be remixed for stereo. No one, not even Martin, knows how they did it. But they did. And the results are both revelatory and astonishing.

Save to say, the album’s 14 tracks are confirmed to be nothing less than brilliant (it wasn’t consistently voted the best album of all time back in the 90s for nothing), with Martin’s beautifully burnished, respectful restorations of *For No One*, *Here There And Everywhere* and the enduringly magnificent *Tomorrow Never Knows* packing particular emotional punch. So there’s your LP/CDs 1 (stereo) and 4 (mono). Disc 5 is a seven-inch EP covering *Paperback Writer* and *Rain*, but the gold for more obsessive members of the Fabs’ fan community come on 2 and 3: the 31 session takes and home demos. Here’s the album’s original midwife George (Giles’s dad) Martin taking McCartney’s direction on *Eleanor Rigby*’s strings, and *Yellow Submarine*’s first take (acoustic Lennon mournfully intoning: ‘In the place where I was born, no one cared, no one cared’) like a clinically depressed Woody Guthrie... And there’s a 100-page book.

There will be divorce papers filed if this doesn’t grace certain stockings come December 25.

■■■■■■■■■■
Ian Fortnam

Kiss

Creatures Of The Night Super-Deluxe Edition UME

Critter ye not, Kiss return to form after *Elder* fiasco. Kiss purists beware: the band’s 1982 album *Creatures Of The Night* does not include the classic Simmons-Stanley-Frehley-Criss quartet, the Cat (Peter Criss) having been replaced the preceding year by the Fox (drummer Eric Carr). Also note that despite being included in the artwork, the Spaceman (Ace Frehley) did not play on *Creatures*, the bulk of the ‘ghost guitar’ being by Vinnie Vincent, soon to join full-time in the guise of the Ankh Warrior. [Enough Kiss characters – Ed.]

Kiss’s career was in the doldrums in ‘82, the band licking their wounds after the release of concept-album cock-up *Music From ‘The Elder’*. A return to basics was required, and *Creatures* delivered. Highlights include the triumphant *I Love It Loud*, the rapacious *War Machine* and the tremblesome ballad *I Still Love You*, with Paul Stanley emoting like a motherfucker. (It wouldn’t surprise us to learn that he recorded his vocals while cradling an ailing puppy in his arms.) But averageness also prevails, especially on the Gene Simmons-led *Killer*, a leery debacle that has dated badly.

This super-deluxe edition – costing, wait for it... anywhere between £200 and £300 – offers more bonus tracks than a Black Friday sale at the Hornby warehouse; there are also countless kollektibles. The best bits are the super-rare stage sound effects, recorded and archived by *Creatures* tour sound engineer Harry Witz. We have adopted Bass Solo Wind and Gargoyles as our Ring doorbell tune and haven’t had an Amazon delivery in weeks.

■■■■■■■■■■
Geoff Barton

Queen

The Miracle Collectors’ Edition UMC

Giant box set featuring six previously unreleased tracks. The big reveal came in June 2022, when Queen guitarist Brian May and drummer Roger Taylor teased the release of a song recorded more than 30 years ago and never before heard outside of the band’s inner circle. *Face It Alone* was demoed during sessions for *The Miracle*, the penultimate Queen album released in singer Freddie

Mercury’s lifetime. That song is one of many treasures in this new box set.

Released in 1989, *The Miracle* has a poignant back story. As May would recall: “We were dealing with Freddie’s deteriorating health and pulling together to support him.” In these circumstances, Mercury delivered extraordinary performances, most powerfully in *I Want It All* and *Was It All Worth It*, the latter, for all its dry wit, now reading like a bittersweet farewell. The album is not one of Queen’s best, but May puts the title track among their greatest songs.

In the box set the guitarist’s beautiful ballad *Too Much Love Will Kill You* is added to the album as originally planned. And while there is much more across these eight discs of vinyl, CD and DVD/Blu-ray, it’s those previously unheard tracks that really sell this package: *Dog With A Bone* is a heavy number with Freddie and Roger singing together, *I Guess We’re Really Falling Out* a piano ballad that turns into a rock jam, and on both tracks the band members are heard talking through their ideas. But the most significant track, by far, is *Face It Alone*, Mercury’s voice full of emotion, the title, in retrospect, so profoundly sad.

■■■■■■■■■■
Paul Elliott

Bang Tango

Psycho Café ROCK CANDY

Right band, wrong place, wrong time.



There were very few bands crawling around LA’s Sunset Strip that looked likely to dodge the grunge wave when it hit. Guns N’ Roses had their last-gang-in-town vibe and were simply too big to fail, but for almost everyone else it was back to the day job/mum’s basement once Kurt Cobain’s familiar refrain rang out on his Fender Jaguar.

Bang Tango (today still a working band) were unlucky not to escape the cut. More handsome goth than gaudy glam, and looking like at least one of them knew his way around a switchblade, they were all PVC trews and tailored shirts slashed to the waist.

This album, now remastered, but no extra songs, and with new sleeve notes that tell a familiar tale of a Hollywood band getting their short-lived

break in 1989, is a reminder of why MCA Records bet on them. The MTV-heavy *Someone Like You*, the grinding *Attack Of Life*, the louche, inventive (read: best song on the album), slow-crawling *Wrap My Wings* all sounded like touchstones of a band headed for arena rock. Until they weren't.

Philip Wilding

Garbage

Anthology BMG

Tech-rock masters lay out their full blueprint.



The godparents of much of today's left-field electro-pop, from Paramore to Halsey, it's easy to think of Garbage as an immovable electro-rock object, cast in titanium in 1996. This chronological 35-song (on CD, 20 on vinyl) collection of singles and prime cuts from their seven albums (although no *Supervixen* – why?), however, tell a different story. Here is more of a T-1000 Terminator of a band, as fluid in their future-rock as the gender-free inhabitants of 2001's toilet free-for-all *Androgyny*.

True, the tracks from their self-

titled 1995 debut seem to perfect a brand of goth-tainted, synthetic electro-rock, like a better-oiled Nine Inch Nails, that has come to define the band. On *Vow* and *Only Happy When It Rains* they evolved grunge-pop into psychedelic industrial realms, and amid the mechanised indie dance of *Queer* and *Stupid Girl* you can almost hear the three production boffins fusing behind Shirley Manson's seductive snarls.

By the time of *I Think I'm Paranoid* and *When I Grow Up* from 1998's *Version 2.0*, though, they're formulating Optimus Prime's idea of bubblegum pop, as if they've uploaded The Pretenders, The Primitives and Strawberry Switchblade. Their 1999 Bond theme *The World Is Not Enough* acts as a peak for their early period mecha-pop largesse, and they slip into a refined electro pop era around *Beautiful Garbage* and *Breaking Up The Girl*.

As later material continued to push at the boundaries, though – particularly on AI chamber-pop track *Bleed Like Me*, space-pop mothership *Tell Me Where It Hurts*, the tech-reggae *Blood For Poppies* and the robo-Patti Smith *No Horses* – Garbage's melodic

panache never falters, and Manson's snaking attacks on cheating husbands, oppressive regimes and capitalist patriarchies never lose their bite.

Beautiful brutality, gleaming trash.

Mark Beaumont

The Alan Parsons Project

Complete Albums

Collection COOKING VINYL

Never mind the bonus...



The vinyl version of the 2014 CD box set comes in a giant flip-top cigarette pack, and contains the previously unreleased *The Sicilian Defence* which was a bonus album in the 2014 set, although 'bonus' is debateable.

The Sicilian Defence was recorded over three days in 1981 – a fraction of the time Parsons and his Project partner Eric Woolfson normally spent on their albums – delivered to Arista Records, and then promptly locked away in the vaults for 33 years. It comprises a series of piano-dominated pieces with no vocals and was, as the title implies, some sort

of chess game with the record company. Parsons never wanted it to be released, and allegedly still doesn't.

So, best put your stylus to work on the 10 'real' albums, which began with 1976's magnificent prog re-imagining of Poe's *Tales Of Mystery And Imagination*, and then the following year proved that lightning can strike twice with Asimov's *I Robot*. Having established a near-faultless reputation their standards never faltered, and after the chart success of *Time* and *Games People Play* from *The Turn Of A Friendly Card* they peaked with the immaculate soft rock of 1982's *Eye In The Sky*. The last four albums are a gentle let-down.

Hugh Fielder

Monster Magnet

Test Patterns, Vol 1

GOD UNKNOWN

The heavy beginnings of the Monster Magnet saga.

If you thought Sleep invented the album-long smoke-out, you're in for a surprise. Back in the late 80s, Jersey stoner champs Monster Magnet bashed out a couple of wild and

fuzzy demo tapes. The first, *Forget About Life, I'm High On Dope*, was anchored around a 20-minute megadose of psychedelic horseshit called *Tab*. The shrill and alarming sounds of suicidal bikers thrumming down death's highway to a soundtrack of Ash Ra Temple playing backwards, it was a truly monolithic work of micro-budget madness; a towering inferno of acid-metal guitars, skittering black-lizard vocals, doomsday samples and pulsating madness. *Tab* bore very little resemblance to the strident space-lord motherfuckers Magnet would eventually become when they could afford better drugs and equipment, but it was still very much in line with frontman Dave Wyndorf's perpetual Jack Kirby/Dave Brock fever dream.

And now it's back, with a wild new 2021 remix that puts a whole new dynamic sheen on this ground-breaking slab of headphone horror. The hissy original lo-fi demo mix is on the flip for the true psych-grunge connoisseur. Both ably demonstrate just how far out – and ahead of their time – these stoner rock pioneers were.

Sleazegrinder

Jimi Hendrix Experience

Los Angeles Forum, April 26, 1969 SONY LEGACY

Jimi pulls off blinder, despite stage invasions, heavy-handed cops and intra-band friction.



"It was a very good one... It's being recorded! By whom? For whom?" declared Noel Redding's diary entry for April 1969's gig at LA's Forum. The ever-gripping bassist, who would leave Hendrix that June, got his answer when most of the show turned up on 1990's *Lifelines* box set.

Now upgraded by Experience Hendrix, the recording from that night perfectly captures the conflict between Jimi's ever-questioning genius and outside pressures in a tumultuous year that also saw his liberty-threatening heroin bust, short-lived Woodstock band and, embracing black roots, the formation of Band Of Gypsys to honour a predatory lawsuit. Happiest forging his fourth album at New York's Record Plant, Jimi felt shackled playing big arenas but, with professionalism ingrained from his chitlin' circuit days, instinctively put on a show, stretching chestnuts into improvisational flights.

In this set the sometimes tangible friction between Hendrix and Redding is bridged by

Mitch Mitchell, playing the first of two drum solos in the opening jam around the instrumental *Tax Free*.

Hendrix initially dispenses flashes of supernatural guitar brilliance more like reflex reactions than extended reveries, although a mercurial *Red House*, followed by jazzy chording and sustained meteor storm that extends *Spanish Castle Magic*, is thrillingly cathartic. Freak-out fusillades in *Purple Haze* and *I Don't Live Today* ignite the 17,000 audience, many rushing the stage already overrun by cops.

Hendrix sounds unsettled, asking the audience to sit down ("to get rid of the other folks"), before coaxing cheeky 'fuck you's from his guitar. After he settles the audience down, the set roars to a sizzling close aboard a savage 17-minute medley of *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)*, Mitchell's second drum solo and Cream's *Sunshine Of Your Love*, Hendrix marking his



crowd-control triumph with the night's most devastating guitar salvo.

If not a classic tour de force, this pressure-cooker set remains an era-capturing document of the social turmoil and pressures Hendrix faced as the world's greatest rock guitarist, always burning to make his next move.

Kris Needs



Guns N' Roses

Use Your Illusion Super Deluxe UME/GEFFEN

If the original 30 tracks weren't enough for you, here's a box set that adds 47 contemporaneous live performances.



On 17 September 1991 Guns N' Roses simultaneously released a pair of double albums, covering a huge range of styles, with writing credits by the four principal members. It was some response to the charge that, in taking four years to properly follow-up their *Appetite For Destruction* debut, the band were a busted flush.

Appetite had changed the world in 54 minutes. *Use Your Illusion I* (7/10) and *II* (8/10) spent more than two and a half hours making it busier – and GN'R grandiose. The *Illusion* albums are guilty (in places) of misogyny and over-indulgence. The 30 songs remain hard to love played end to end. There's also an elephant in the room: Axl Rose's voice. It's an angle grinder that disfigures many fine songs and does horrible things to Wings' *Live And Let Die*. But hey, he wrote the epic ballads *Don't Cry* and *November Rain*, and *Estranged* and *Coma* – an amazing piece of work – and invited Alice Cooper aboard to make *The Garden* near-perfect.

'Super Deluxe' means a box set that contains the originals remastered, a 100-page book and assorted reproduction ephemera. But it's the two never-before-released complete live sets you'll treasure – if you can afford around £250 for the CDs, or more than £400 for the 12-disc

vinyl version. Both the vinyl and CD boxes include *Live In New York* from the Ritz Theatre on May 16, 1991 and *Live In Las Vegas* from the Thomas & Mack Center on January 25, 1992, plus a Blu-ray video of the full Ritz show.

The feverish club atmosphere of New York (9/10) gives it the edge over Las Vegas (8/10). The former was effectively a public rehearsal, Vegas a full-blown 18,000-seat stadium show. At the first, newly installed drummer Matt Sorum and keyboard player Dizzy Reed backed Axl, Slash, Izzy Stradlin and Duff McKagan. By the time they got to Vegas several months later, Stradlin had left and had been replaced by Gilby Clarke.

At The Ritz they played 12 *Illusion* tunes (including *Pretty Tied Up*, *Right Next Door To Hell* and *Dust N' Bones*). The much longer Las Vegas show had only 11 and a lot more of *Appetite*. Oddly, despite all the new material, they opted to play 10 covers/snippets: adopting the Wings tune and Dylan's *Knockin' On Heaven's Door* as Duff sang the Misfits' *Attitude* and Clarke showcased the Stones' *Wild Horses*, while Slash bookended *Civil War* with some *Voodoo Child* licks.

For GN'R, the times they were a-changin'. Best to freeze them here.

Neil Jeffries

Slade

Sladest BMG

Hit-packed artefact for coloured-vinyl connoisseurs.



As rumours continue to circulate – perhaps exclusively

among overly optimistic men in their 60s who won't be there anyway – that the original Slade line-up could well be set for Glastonbury 2023's Sunday afternoon legends slot, here again is their very first greatest hits package.

Originally released to corner the Christmas market of 1973, *Sladest* didn't hit No.1 until mid-January, largely because their core teenaged constituency had already spent their festive cash on their *Merry Xmas Everybody* single which, on its first time out of the traps, camped out at the top spot for some time. Looking back, the release of *Sladest* seems ludicrously premature. After all, Slade had only been charting for two years, but pop moved a lot faster in the 70s.

Alongside a batch of ripe-for-rediscovery pre-fame crackers (*Wild Winds Are Blowing*, *Know Who You Are*) were no less than eight hits, including five No.1s. Oh, and there was another reason *Sladest* took a while to reach the top. Between its late September arrival and the unleashing of *Merry Xmas Everybody* in early November, they'd managed to skeweeze in *My Friend Stan*, which teetered on the brink at No.2 in October. Faster times, indeed.

Anyway, here it is again on blue-splatter vinyl (and why not?), and what a track-list: *Mama Weer All Crazee Now*, *Cum On Feel The Noize*, *Gudbuy T'Jane* et al, all timeless, all sounding significantly better than remembered. Of course there's a slightly expanded CD version as well. That includes *Merry Xmas Everybody*. Which you may have already heard.

Ian Fortnam

Echo & The Bunnymen

Evergreen (25th Anniversary Edition) LONDON

Expanded reissue for sumptuous 1997 comeback by legendary Liverpool gobshites.



After a lengthy hiatus marked by break-ups, name changes, solo projects

and grieving over the tragic

death of drummer Pete de Freitas, the surviving trio of Bunnymen finally reunited at the height of Britpop to show upstarts like Oasis and The Verve how to make majestic, guitar-jangling anthems like proper northern rock aristocrats.

Evergreen, released in 1997, gave these Liverpool post-punk veterans their first Top 10 album and their biggest hit single in a decade: the soaringly romantic and still magnificent *Nothing Lasts Forever* (with a young Liam Gallagher on backing vocals). The rest of this classy, expansive, string-heavy collection also holds up surprisingly well 25 years on, from Ian McCulloch's grainy, soulful croon on *In My Time* to Will Sergeant's scorching psych-rock pyrotechnics on *I Want to Be There* (*When You Come*).

In its two-CD version, this reissue bulks up to 33 tracks including B-sides, radio sessions and live cuts. All but four are already available, but it's still a thrill to hear an acoustic chamber-rock version of *Nothing Lasts Forever* alongside reworked Bunnymen classics like *Rescue*, *Lips Like Sugar* and *The Killing Moon*. Of the previously unreleased live material, only *Just A Touch Away* gains in stature in this rattling, booming take.

Stephen Dalton

Symposium

Do You Remember How It Was? 1996/1999 COOKING VINYL

OMG, they were such a killer live band.



During my brief tenure as editor of *Melody Maker*, I slapped Symposium on

the cover as "The Best Live Band in Britain", on the basis of their blistering debut mini-album *One Day At A Time*. It was something to do with youth, exuberance, sweat, sinews, loud guitars, killer punk-pop hook lines, small venues, stage-diving... plus some great singles!

During Symposium's entirely live performance on *Top Of The Pops* in 1997 for the exuberant *Fairweather Friend*, frontman Ross became the only singer in the show's history to stage dive, and the band (Wojtek Godzisz and co.) received only the third stage invasion, after Nirvana and Oasis.

Think a cross between early Supergrass, early Die Toten Hosen and a shredding of Ash and Soundgarden... somewhere

thereabouts. It's all here, their brief rampant history – well, some of the finest 16 tracks, anyhow – all the way through to their final single, 1999's moody *Killing Position*, plus a few bonus not-on-album tracks.

As they sing on *Bleach*: 'Bleach in your motherfucking eye, I won't take this lying down... I'll go out kicking something, go out fighting'.



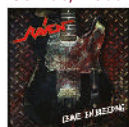
Everett True

Raven

Leave 'Em Bleeding

STEAMHAMMER/SPV

Corvus, wot a scorchers.



Thrash- and speed-metal originators. NWOBHM pioneers.

Creators of *Athletic Rock* – both the music genre and the song, the latter including the lyrics: 'I'm into mental metal, my ears are well blown out.' Yep, Geordie veterans Raven's crash-bang-wallop of a career deserves mucho respect.

That said, *Leave 'Em Bleeding* is a strange beast, featuring the best of the band's past seven years plus (and we quote) "as a special gift to their large crowd of followers, Raven treats us to

six bonus tracks one shouldn't miss out on". It's an odd concept, even if the music is undeniably stormtroopin' in nature. The retro songs, taken from the albums *ExtermiNation* (2015) and *Metal City* (2020), bear the trio's trademark characteristics – breathless, strident, brimming with bedevilment – the best of the bunch being the awesome *Battle March/Tank Treads*, now especially poignant given the war in the Ukraine. The bonus tracks include covers of Montrose's *Space Station #5* and Thin Lizzy's *Bad Reputation*.



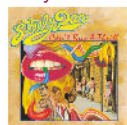
Geoff Barton

Steely Dan

Can't Buy A Thrill

GEFFEN/UMF

Yes you can.



Which of 1972 or '73 was the best ever year for rock releases is

endlessly arguable. Far less so that it was one of those two fabulously rock-rich years, with *Exile On Main St*, *Ziggy Stardust*, *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, *Tubular Bells*, *Quadrophonia* and so many more truly great albums coming off a freakish

non-stop conveyor-belt delivery of shit-hot vinyl.

Slap-bang in the middle of that golden period, in January '73 (two months earlier in the US), Steely Dan's debut *Can't Buy A Thrill* arrived, with its stylishly and thoughtfully crafted pop-rock mix splashed with country and jazz flavours, its knowing artistry, all wrapped up in a seductive aura of musical and lyrical sophistication.

Right from the off, with the summer-zephyr feel of *Do It Again* with its subtly tricky guitar and keyboard solos, *Dirty Work*, and the jazz-licked *Only A Fool Would Say That*, it was clear that this was not an album of three-chord-trick songs about cars and girls. For many its big sell is the bouncy *Reelin' In The Years*, with its celebrated twin-guitar solo (often cited as a favourite of Jimmy Page), while *Midnight Cruiser* and the lovely, country-tinged *Brooklyn* (Owes *The Charmer Under Me*), the former with yet another hot, gritty guitar solo, are mature rock-pop songs that grow in stature with repeated listenings.

Can't Buy A Thrill didn't just become a period classic, it also helped usher in a new type of album that was bought not only

by rock-pop fans but also the hip-cool sophisticates.

This 50th-anniversary remaster reissue (no extras) comes on SACD and audiophile vinyl pressings, but even on a battered and scarred original the music is superb.



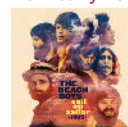
Paul Henderson

The Beach Boys

Sail On Sailor – 1972

CAPITOL/UMF

Six-CD/five-LP box sets featuring Beach Boys albums, live material and out-takes from early 70s.



By 1972 the Beach Boys were drifting apart into various

factions. They were a group coming to terms with the high achievements of their recent past, a past which they were forced to replicate live in the present day, as the Carnegie Hall material featured here attests. Their future was uncertain. With Brian Wilson now peripheral to the band's studio work, although still a creative force, it fell to brother Carl to take control of the group. Hence *Carl And The Passions* – So

Tough (1972), which sees the group take a country-rock-ish, Band-like feel at times, although style-wise it drifts from the Spectoresque *Marcella* to Carl's *Feel Flows*-like *All This Is That* to Brian's masterly, pertinent *You Need A Mess Of Help To Stand Alone*. Critically panned at the time, retrospectively the album's diamonds in the rough have been appreciated.

Holland followed in 1973, made without Bruce Johnston. *Steamboat*, an inward, hankering voyage to Mark Twain's America, and *California Saga* are wreathed in the hankering, implacable nostalgia that is key to the Beach Boys. Carl offers the blue-eyed, well-meaning *The Trader*, opining that slavery was bad. But it's Brian's *Mt. Vernon & Fairway*, *A Fairytale* that is most striking, a narrative about a Young Prince and his transistor radio that is somewhere between *Peter And The Wolf* and John Cale.

Among the out-takes, acoustic sketches, etc here, it's the a-capella versions of various tracks that touch the most, displays of harmonic unity in the midst of disharmony.



David Stubbs

Captain Beefheart And The Magic Band

Clear Spot

RHINO

Two-disc clear-vinyl 50th-anniversary reissue, now with tasty extras icing the cake.

For those for whom Captain Beefheart's 1969's album *Trout Mask Replica* seems a daunting, byzantine prospect, 1972's *Clear Spot* is the perfect gateway to CB – equally brilliant but more accessible, without resorting to bland shortcuts. On *Clear Spot*, he and his band meld a sleek storm of blues, boogie, poetry, avant-garde jazz, space-rock, feminism, soul and the uniquely irregular zig-zag wandering weave of the warped Beefheart groove.

Each of the players has to assume an alter ego – e.g. Zoot Horn Rollo (Bill Harkleroad), Ed Marimba (Art Tripp) – as if to forfeit their selves and become instruments of Beefheart's will; become, like him, something else, man.

And Lord, do they yell from the get-go. *Lo Yo Yo Stuff*'s down-below, frugging riff grinds deep, dark and soft, its gratification tempered by *Nowadays A Woman's Gotta Hit A Man*, slapping and sliding. Incidentally, Zoot Horn Rollo's slide is better than Jimmy Page's on *When The Levee Breaks*. It's with *Too Much Time, My Head Is My*

Only House Unless It Rains and *Her Eyes Are A Blue Million Miles*, however, that Beefheart hits an entirely new register – Stax-soulful, plaintive, a whole other body and soul.

Still, the crest of *Clear Spot*, the climax, still rising after all these years, is *Big Eyed Beans From Venus*, on which Zoot hits that long lunar note, piercing a hole in the ozone layer through which the Venusian manna can flow, now as then. Not many people knew it, but this was one of the albums of 1972. Its hugeness was in inverse proportion to its sales.

The second disc on this edition, one of a spate of reissues from Rhino, features rare out-takes, alternative versions and rough mixes from the *Clear Spot* sessions. In search of a commercial breakthrough, Beefheart had enlisted producer Ted Templeman and engineer Don Landee, who had helped polish and shape the Doobie



Brothers and Van Morrison. Meanwhile, he ceded arrangements to the highly gifted Zoot Horn Rollo. While it's fascinating to hear how these tracks took shape, ultimately it's rejected material, the sweet spot where Beefheart and the Magic Band alighted, that truly counts.



David Stubbs



David Bowie

A Divine Symmetry (An Alternative Journey Through Hunky Dory) PARLOPHONE

Demos, concerts and more from Bowie's '71.



Bowie's on sale again. And this time it's *Hunky Dory*; or rather *An Alternative Journey Through Hunky Dory* (everything's a 'journey' nowadays). And just as The Beatles' career is posthumously revisited, remixed and rejigged, so David Bowie's back catalogue looks set to be endlessly revisited, in a seemingly endless series of little boxes. Unlike the Beatles ones – in which not enough demos are trickled down and too many new mixes are delivered – the Bowie boxes have been curated almost from a fan's point of view. Yes, there are alternative mixes, but these are not excessive in number or degree. Yes, there are repeats, but only because full sessions and so on are now included. *Divine Symmetry* for once does what it promises to do, which is track Bowie's progression in one extraordinary year.

From demos of *Hunky Dory* material and other songs (including *King Of The City*, a fantastic song, previously unknown to most people) to BBC sessions and concerts (the full John Peel concert with Bowie and friends, including Mick Ronson and Dana Gillespie, is here, in both mono and stereo), this is a comprehensive trawl through 1971 – and an extraordinary one. Gone is everything from the proto-metal apocalypse of *The Man Who Sold The World* bar *The Supermen*; now there are piano

ballads, acoustic musings and a lot of Biff Rose. This Bowie is a singer-songwriter, and he's about to be very good at it. What's also fascinating is how little the songs change as each new element – the studio, the band – is added. Bowie's ideas almost always seemed to arrive fully formed.

This collection shows both the arrival of the new and the lingering of the old: shades of the arts lab persist in the commune approach of the Peel concert, while songs like *Looking For A Friend* and *How Lucky You Are* (also known as *Miss Peculiar*) suggest avenues never taken. It's the second live concert included here that shows the future. Recorded at Friars, Aylesbury on September 25, 1971, it begins with the present: Bowie and Ronson acoustic; Bowie nervous and over-sharing; opening with two Biff Rose songs; apologising for doing *Space Oddity* ("One of mine that we get over with as soon as possible"); and then bringing on the Spiders From Mars for a set that's half piano and half rock and ends with *Waiting For The Man*, a song by the anti-Biff Rose Lou Reed. The audience go wild, and the seeds of Ziggy and the Bowie avalanche of 1972 are sown. But for now it's the dawn of *Hunky Dory*, and Bowie's latest and greatest future has begun.

★★★★★★★★

David Quantick

John Cougar Mellencamp

Scarecrow Deluxe

MERCURY/UME

How the Little Bastard got serious.

Scarecrow was a statement record for Mellencamp. In 1982, when still trading as John Cougar, he'd marked out his territory in a line from his breakthrough hit single *Jack & Diane* – 'two American kids growing up in the heartland'. A year later he delivered a stinging protest song in *Pink Houses*.

But it was with 1995's *Scarecrow* that he made his reputation as a major artist with a powerful voice. *New York Times* critic Jon Pareles said it was "an album about America", in which Mellencamp "wants to pay tribute to the heartland's workers, to stick up for the unglamorous life".

Its opening track, *Rain On The Scarecrow*, went hand in hand with Mellencamp's leading role in Farm Aid. The titles of *Small Town* and *Justice And Independence* '85 spoke volumes. And if these were, in spirit, modern folk songs, Mellencamp was always a rock'n'roller at heart, kicking ass on *Lonely O' Night* and *R.O.C.K. In The U.S.A.*

This new Deluxe edition adds a bunch of demos, and cover versions of two 60s classics: The Drifters' *Under The Boardwalk* played sweetly, and James Brown's *Cold Sweat* banged out in a manner that the Godfather of Soul would surely have endorsed.

★★★★★★★★

Paul Elliott

Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers

Live At The Fillmore, 1997

WARNERS

The Heartbreakers' 20-date San Fran residency distilled.

"We're the house band here at the Fillmore," Tom Petty semi-jokes, during his 20-date residency at the legendary San Francisco venue in 1997. And on this 72-track collection compiled from the final six shows, he and the Heartbreakers certainly live up to the job description.

Mostly playing covers of songs that inspired them, they revel in classic rock'n'roll boogies (*Lucille*, *Around And Around*), blues workouts (*I'd Love To Love You Baby*, *Crazy Mama*) and psychedelic Americana (The Zombies' *I Want You Back Again*), and even have a surf country crack at *Goldfinger*. Roger

McGuinn and John Lee Hooker arrive to front sections devoted to their songs, and the Heartbreakers themselves tribute the likes of the Stones, Bo Diddley, JJ Cale, The Kinks, Patti Smith and (unsurprisingly faithfully) Bob Dylan.

The band's evident love for the material floods the performances, even though they can overdo the jamming when they get a groove going, and reverence dampens Hooker's guest spot. But Petty's own songs, deployed sparingly, sound infinitely fresher and tighter: *American Girl* and *I Won't Back Down* are stripped back to harmony-smothered acoustic singalongs; *Runnin' Down A Dream* and *You Wreck Me* are speedster rock high points; *Free Fallin'* feels like a glider ride over a gleaming LA. Songs like *California*, *Angel Dream* and *Walls (Circus)* from 1996 soundtrack album *She's The One* represent Petty's lustrous country folk reaching sublime heights.

As Petty and the Heartbreakers fulfil a fan's shout-out for *Heartbreaker's Beach Party* and revisit their first ever recording, *On The Street* – essentially a hyped-up pop Dylan – you get the sense of an inclusive month of warm indulgence, a band coasting on 20 years of accumulated powers.

★★★★★★★★

Mark Beaumont

Vanilla Fudge

Vanilla Zeppelin

GOLDEN ROBOT

A dozen Led Zep covers, Fudged in a good way.



Vanilla Fudge's eighth album, originally released in 2007 as *Out*

Through The In Door, comprised covers of Led Zeppelin songs. It was also the last Fudge album with bassist Tim Bogert, who died in 2021.

Now remastered and re-sequenced, its 12 tracks – including deep cuts *All My Love* and *Fool In The Rain* – are mostly characterised by frontman Mark Stein's vocals (more soulful than Robert Plant's) and his organ playing (generally more prevalent than John-Paul Jones's). In places, though, Vanilla Fudge stretch the envelope further. Drummer Carmine Appice sets up *Rock And Roll* as a shuffle, and guitarist Vince Martell sings it in a doo-wop style. The riff to *Dancing Days* is wonderfully

slurred, and Appice's lead vocal takes it into left-field. *Trampled Underfoot* has Martell riffing through a wah-wah pedal. *Dazed & Confused* starts on keyboards then finger-clicks into a jazzy groove before rocking out. Unsurprisingly, none of the tracks top the originals, but all are rendered affectionately and cleverly different.

Neil Jeffries

World Party

Egyptology SEAVIEW

Decent fourth album, cherry-picked by Robbie Williams.



World Party's Karl Wallinger sang about ecological collapse before

it was an actual imminent thing. He was a Beatles believer before Oasis and their shouty version of the era. World Party were out of time and outstanding, particularly on their 1990 album *Goodbye Jumbo*. Wallinger connected Sly Stone, Prince and the Beach Boys with sweetness and grace. Plus surplus Beatles joy. A classic.

He was pressured to return briskly with *Bang!* in 1993, which was excellent in parts. But the industry machinations sapped the lightless out of his art, and 1997's *Egyptology* was his last roll with a major label. At times he sounds inverted and lacking in focus. But not always.

She's The One was the piano tune that unrolled into a lovely declaration. It did not go unnoticed. Sometime World Party member Guy Chambers took it to Robbie Williams to record and added strings, Wallinger's rhythm section was secretly hired, and it became the massive hit.

Wallinger has been ambivalent at best about the heist. *Egyptology* is now reissued, with added bonus live tracks, requesting fresh love for *Beautiful Dream*, the ever-assured *Call Me Up* and more.



Stuart Bailie

Type O Negative

Dead Again NUCLEAR BLAST

Goth-metal kings' patchy 2007 swansong, exhumed after years out of print.

'I can't believe I died last night/Oh God I'm dead again,' Type O Negative singer/bassist Peter Steele howls on the punk-edged title track of the New Yorkers' seventh album *Dead Again*. The frontman's obsession with

mortality had been ever-present in his lyrics, but this time it proved prophetic. In 2010, Steele died of sepsis following years of alcohol and substance abuse, and at least one suicide attempt.

It would be easy to say *Dead Again* is a fitting epitaph, but it isn't. The dark majesty and humour of mid-90s epics *Bloody Kisses* and *October Rust* had long been replaced by a stifling sense of gloom and bitterness. *Tripping A Blind Man* and *The Profit Of Doom* weigh in at a joyless 17 minutes between them, which wouldn't be so bad if they weren't the second and third tracks. There are flashes of the beauty that once sat shoulder to shoulder with despair, notably the plaintive *September Sun*, but they're scarce.

Dead Again was surrounded by an air of finality even before Steele's death – their label Steamhammer went under in 2009, and the album has been out of print until now. This reissue adds a disc's worth of live tracks of varying quality, which will make Type O fans happy, even if it remains an imperfect headstone.



Dave Everley

That Petrol Emotion

Every Future Has A Beginning: An Anthology 1984-1994 DEMON

Wiry if workmanlike 121-track career compilation.



One can't help wondering how That Petrol Emotion might have sounded

if comedic fisherman Paul Whitehouse hadn't failed his audition to be their vocalist. (In fairness, he was inebriated on the day).

The band chugged away for a decade, never quite swept up by any movement, gathering a loyal fan base and great reviews but no crossover traction. For devotees they boldly burned pathways through alt.rock, indie and early sampling, foreseeing Madchester's baggy scene.

For laymen they tried a bit of everything but none of it quite stuck. The Northern Irish, London-based band, formed by the O'Neill brothers from The Undertones, gave their American singer solid melodies and muscular, practical riffs to work with. Crisp pop songs like *Big Decision* and *It's A Good Thing* broke free of the moorings of the compressed production.

This anthology, curated by the band, brings seven discs – their five albums, one live, plus a generous dollop of B-sides, remixes and fan club-only releases – with a book and memorabilia. Those album titles – *Manic Pop Thrill*, *Babble*, *End Of The Millennium Psychosis Blues*, *Chemical*, *Fireproof* – suggest intentions that may have come across in concerts; a will to start fires. Certainly they weren't shy of political statements. The records, though, generally feel reined in and repressed, conveying a sense that they'd have loved to cut loose and stray from standard structures. It's on the third album that they hit their best groove, with *Cellophane* and *Candy Love Satellite* fusing passion and fun. In those moments they're cooking with gas.

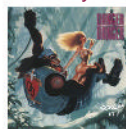


Chris Roberts

Danger Danger

Screw It! ROCK CANDY

'Difficult second album' in more ways than one.



Among the myriad hair bands of the 80s, Danger Danger are among those that should have achieved much more. Timing is everything, though, and just as *Screw It!* – originally titled *Monkey Business* – was being lined up for release in late 1991, with the title track as lead single, the band found themselves in a head-on lack-of-imagination collision with Skid Row, who got their *Monkey Business*, from *Slave To The Grind*, out first. Hence a hasty album title change for Danger Danger.

The album was a confident follow-up to their 1989 debut, if a tad uneven; the big dumb sex of *Horny S.O.B.* and *Slipped Her The Big One* (Steel Panther would be so proud) and daft rap spoof *Yeah, You Want It!* rubbing up against classy pop-rockers like *Beat The Bullet*, *Don't Blame It On Love* and *Comin' Home*. Altogether, *Screw It!* was irrepressibly fun and upbeat – and totally at odds with the era's grungy zeitgeist, not to mention the attitude of their label.

While *Screw It!* was the difficult second album, that was nothing compared to the debacle of album number three, *Cockroach*, which was shelved amid much band in-fighting. But that's another story.



Essi Berelien

BEST OF THE REST

Other reissues out this month

Siouxsie And The Banshees

All Souls UNIVERSAL

Conceptual marketing, eh? Ten tracks, chosen by Sioux, half-speed remastered for vinyl and reissued by way of an 'autumnal celebration'. *Fireworks*, *Halloween*, the track-list writes itself. *Spellbound* recently featured in *Stranger Things*. A total coincidence, I'm sure. **7/10**

These Animal Men

Too Sussed / Taxi For These Animal Men DEMON

Ahead of a keenly anticipated split box-set with S*M*A*S*H (set for spring), the New Wave Of New Wave's leading lights' first two mid-90s EPs, neatly coupled on vinyl, capture street-sharp, speed-fuelled, mod/punk fury. Brighton's These Animal Men: the fiery Britpop template that time forgot. **8/10**

Frijid Pink

Frijid Pink REPERTOIRE

Remastered for pink vinyl, 1970's *Frijid Pink* is still most notable for its fuzzed-to-the-max hit cover of *House Of The Rising Sun*. The blues-based quintet's originals fell relatively short, and posterity ultimately favoured close Detroit contemporaries The MC5 and Stooges. **7/10**

Ian Hunter

Overnight Angels ROCK CANDY

Hunter latterly distanced himself from 1977's Roy Thomas Baker-produced third album. In dogged pursuit of hits he strains at the top of his register (*Golden Opportunity*) and pantomimes Mott (*Justice Of The Peace*), but it does have its moments. The addition of *England Rocks* helps. **7/10**

Dave Clark Five

All The Hits 7" Box BMG

Early-60s Britbeat belongs on seven-inch vinyl, it's the format it was designed for. Singles effect to accentuate its immediacy, its pre-permissive macho desperation. Witness the Tottenham drummer-led Five's beefy, proto-Slade stomps through *Bits And Pieces* and *Glad All Over*. **7/10**

Humble Pie

I Need A Star In My Life CLEOPATRA

Following the modest reception accorded *Thunderbox*, Clem Clempson-era Pie retreated to Steve Marriott's home studio to make this off-the-leash, guest-heavy (Boz Burrell, Mel Collins) follow-up. Rejected by '75 A&M as 'too funky', it's something of a lost, genre-fluid gem. **7/10**

Love

Expressions Tell Everything 7" Box Set NEW LAND +

Apparently Madonna had never heard Love's *She Comes In Colours* (A-side four of eight in this immensely desirable singles box collection) when she wrote *Beautiful Stranger*. That said, Arthur Lee probably hadn't heard Steptoe And Son's *Old Ned* when he wrote *My Little Red Book*. Equilibrium. **7/10**

Essential Logic

Logically Yours HISS AND SHAKE

Ex-X-Ray Spex saxophonist Lora Logic formed Essential Logic in '78, and this batch of 50 recordings – their sole album *Beat Rhythm News*, various singles, unearthed exclusives – is textbook art-school post-punk. Wilfully off-kilter, engagingly Raincoat-y. But essential? Nah. **6/10**

Human League

The Virgin Years Box Set UMC

Four LPs, one 12-inch EP, five different-coloured vinyls. An intrinsically 80s release for the most irretrievably 80s combo of all. Human League Mk II defined commercial cocktail-bar electro-pop's future, and an electric-blue *Dare* is worth the cover charge alone... A hundred and twenty quid? Do what? **8/10**

Jim Bob

The Essential Jim Bob CHERRY RED

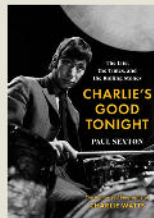
Like a lanky indie hybrid of Ken Loach and Steven Spielberg, Jim 'Bob' Morrison's Carter USM owned the 90s alt scene, cranking out witty, emotionally weighty, tears-in-beers kitchen-sink traumas. And as this two-CD CV proves, there's still no finer wrangler of a pithy couplet. **8/10**



Charlie's Good Tonight

Paul Sexton HARPER COLLINS

Authorised biography of late Stones drummer and gentleman jazzier Charlie Watts.



By virtue of their profile and longevity, there have probably been more books written about the Rolling Stones than any other rock-era combo other than those blokes who gifted them *I Wanna Be Your Man*. And inevitably, more than a few hacks have hacked out more than a few hack jobs over the past six decades of the band's concurrent fame and infamy. You can rest assured, however, that Paul Sexton isn't one of them. Few journalists have been closer to the band over the past 30 years than the former *Record Mirror* writer; he's profiled the Stones in print and on air for BBC Radio 2 countless times, and as a consequence he has gained their trust. Securing forewords by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards in a biography of their relatively recently deceased closest friend and colleague is one thing, but getting the word 'authorised' on to its cover is something else. Thankfully, the band's confidence hasn't been misplaced.

Charlie's Good Tonight is the book that every Stones fan will want to read this Christmas, largely because, like its subject, it's sharp, straightforward and blessed with significant dry wit. It also benefits from that most precious and desirable of all commodities when dealing with the Rolling Stones: access. Sexton has spoken

at length with all of Charlie Watts's fellow Stones (including his longtime partner in swing-assisted rhythmic precision and obsessive compulsive collecting, Bill Wyman), his friends (childhood neighbour, jazz enthusiast and bassist Dave Green, ex-Decca/Apple mover/shaker Tony King), his family (daughter, sister), ex-Stones producer Glyn Johns, their former manager Andrew Loog Oldham, and Nettie Baker, daughter/biographer of Charlie's close confidante and enduring (if possibly somewhat unlikely, considering their chalk-and-cheese demeanours) jazz-rooted drumming compadre Ginger.

Fast-paced and readable, resolutely refusing to get too bogged down in wearily familiar Stones history and lore, *Charlie's Good Tonight* remains focused on its subject, revealing much (Lennie Peters of Peters And Lee was Charlie's uncle; "The only blind person I've ever known who could hang wallpaper," says Charlie's sister Linda) and, happily, confirming more. Charlie was exactly the speak-as-you-find, humble, stylish, honest man you expect, and at his story's heart is an enduring love affair, with his wife Shirley, the other half of the strongest marriage in rock.

An essential purchase.



Ian Fortnam

Long Road: Pearl Jam And The Soundtrack Of A Generation

Steven Hyden HACHETTE

Grunge stars' broader influence.



Pearl Jam are not known for their enthusiasm for interviews – from the earliest days they've balked at the starrier side of stardom. No surprise, then, that they didn't speak to rock critic Steven Hyden for this book, nor did he approach them. As he points out, getting Pearl Jam's thoughts on Pearl Jam would have been pointless because that book already exists in the shape of 2011's *Pearl Jam Twenty*.

Instead he's taken a more creative approach with a wider focus. Presented as a mixtape, each chapter takes the name of one of their songs and explores a different element in PJ's history, putting it in the context of popular culture and the political and social landscape of the time. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the band, and although he doesn't shy away from some of Pearl Jam's more fractious elements, he captures perfectly the experience of being a young fan of Eddie Vedder et al, and of being a teenager navigating the mid-90s. As such it's a nostalgic and oddly moving journey for us Generation Xers, and a likeable alternative-culture history lesson for those who came along later.



Emma Johnston

Some New Kind Of Kick: A Memoir

Kid Congo Powers

(& Chris Campion) HACHETTE

Eloquent memoir of ex-Cramp.



Growing up in east LA's Mexican community, Brian Tristan relocated to Hollywood's glam scene as a Bowie-struck gay teenager. Smitten by punk in '76, he started a Ramones fan club, clicked with Blondie club president Jeffrey Lee Pierce, who taught him blues guitar, and the pair started The Gun Club before he joined the Cramps.

Named Kid Congo Powers by Lux and Ivy, he debuted on 1980's *Psychodelic Jungle* carrying a long-time heroin addiction. Returning to The Gun Club for *The Las Vegas Story*,

Powers navigated Pierce's wild disintegration before playing with Fur Bible then Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds between 1987 and 1990.

Peppered with relentless sex, drugs and loss (including Pierce in '96), bravely underscored by dealing with his sexuality, Powers's story might've ended there, but cleaning up brought further projects including Pink Monkey Birds and now this beautifully written, profoundly evocative milestone.



Kris Needs

The Lives Of Brian

Brian Johnson HARPER COLLINS

AC/DC singer tells his story.



A diminutive Geordie's sudden switch from sweating under an oily car engine in Newcastle to

recording *Back In Black* in the Bahamas with AC/DC is one of rock's great Cinderella stories. And there are many more stories than that for Brian Johnson to impart in this memoir, starting with tales of an impoverished post-war childhood in Newcastle (where even his own extended family looked down on his half-Italian heritage), before recounting AC/DC's many triumphs in entertaining fashion, and ending the story with his bewildering health scares before his temporary hiatus from the band. Johnson (aided by the customary ghost writer) has an amusing turn of phrase when reflecting on those years and the brief flush of fame Geordie enjoyed before (via a startling and inspiring lunch date with Roger Daltrey) he was catapulted from near-obscure to flat-capped ubiquity within the space of a few months in 1980. And, unlike his previous memoir, 2009's *Rockers And Rollers*, you don't need to know or care about carburetors.



Johnny Sharp

Chuck Berry: An American Life

RJ Smith OMNIBUS

Deep-dive bio of rock pioneer.

Chuck Berry, RJ Smith tells us at the outset of this richly detailed and informative biography, was seriously into cars. He saw the car as a metaphor for the motion essential to his music. It was the 1950s, and he was going places, crossing established state lines, taking

in the sounds that drifted over the waves of his radio – not just blues and soul but hillbilly boogie, Cuban boleros, Mexican songs, Frankie Lane, Sinatra, Charlie Christian. All of these would be grist to his vehicle, setting rock'n'roll on the road.

Smith shows how, despite Berry's desire to transcend his blackness, seething prejudice was insurmountable. He was an unpleasant – ultimately deeply unpleasant – man, but Smith shows how his aggressive care with money and his terrible attitude to women were in his own mind a revenge on a racist society. Superhuman in his achievements, not quite human as a man.



David Stubbs

The Jam 1982

Rick Buckler & Zoe Howe

OMNIBUS

Mod icons' swansong year.

Drummer Rick Buckler was the stylish member of The Jam – the one who for ages we believed was the singer, he looked so sharp. Sharp in print too. On the verge of The Jam's arena status, Buckler comments at the end of his touching intro: "Without guidance in our business affairs, we carried on... buoyed up by our fans and our love of playing live. Then came 1982."

What follows is a warts-and-all oral history of The Jam's final, traumatic year, led by Buckler and supported by a cast of dozens of insiders, with a couple of key voices missing, obviously. The shock waves of the event are still being felt 40 years on. As Bruce Foxton put it: "We'd still meet fans after the show and they'd all be in tears: 'Why are you calling it a day?' And I'm in tears on the other side: 'I don't know! I don't know.'"

This superbly illustrated book makes me want to go and listen to The Jam from 1982 (like I have every year since). That's a helluva recommendation.

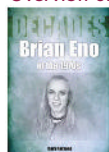


Everett True

Brian Eno In The 1970s

Gary Parsons SONICBOND

Overview of ex-Roxy boffin.



It took some doing to stand out within the line-up of one of Britain's most startlingly outre pop acts,

but from the moment Roxy Music emerged in 1972, Brian Eno managed it. He would soon

prove more than just a not-particularly-pretty face, though, and in this latest instalment of Sonicbond's album-by-album overviews, Gary Parsons takes us through Eno's journey from prog-glam oddball to sonic adventurer and ambient pioneer.

But, frankly, he doesn't do much more. In the absence of original interviews, he relies on quotes from existing books and old music-press interviews, meaning seasoned Roxy watchers won't find anything new here, even if Parsons offers a tidy enough account of Eno's solo projects and other collaborations. A rather dry prose style and well-worn comparisons (Roxy "looked like they had been beamed down from another planet") don't add any further colour to a functional affair whose style is in stark contrast to its maverick subject.



Johnny Sharp

The London Boys: Bowie, Bolan And The 60s Teenage Dream

Marc Burrows PEN & SWORD

Dandies in the underworld.



The story of two post-war kids, one from suburban south London and the other from inner city

Hackney, who pinged around the pop machine during the 60s as they chased dreams of stardom.

This skilfully assembled tour of socio-rock history passes through beatniks, folk, mods and psychedelia as it shows how Jones and Feld orbited each other on their respective journeys to becoming Bowie and Bolan. It ends in 1970, with Bowie rehearsing a new band with Mick Ronson, and Bolan and Mickey Finn recording *Ride A White Swan*. Quotes from published sources are cleverly woven into the author's thoughtful asides on the much-mythologised subjects. The critical difference between them, he says, is that Bowie studied his art and music seriously, while the flash Bolan always sought a shortcut to stardom. Fate brings the two stars together for the television show *Marc* in September 1977, where Bolan pleads for more studio time with his old pal Bowie, because "this might never happen again".



Claudia Elliott

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Rock In Rio

Guns N' Roses, Billy Idol and Green Day head up the second weekend of the world's biggest rock festival.

BACK TO LIVE

THE HIGH-VOLTAGE WHAT'S ON GUIDE

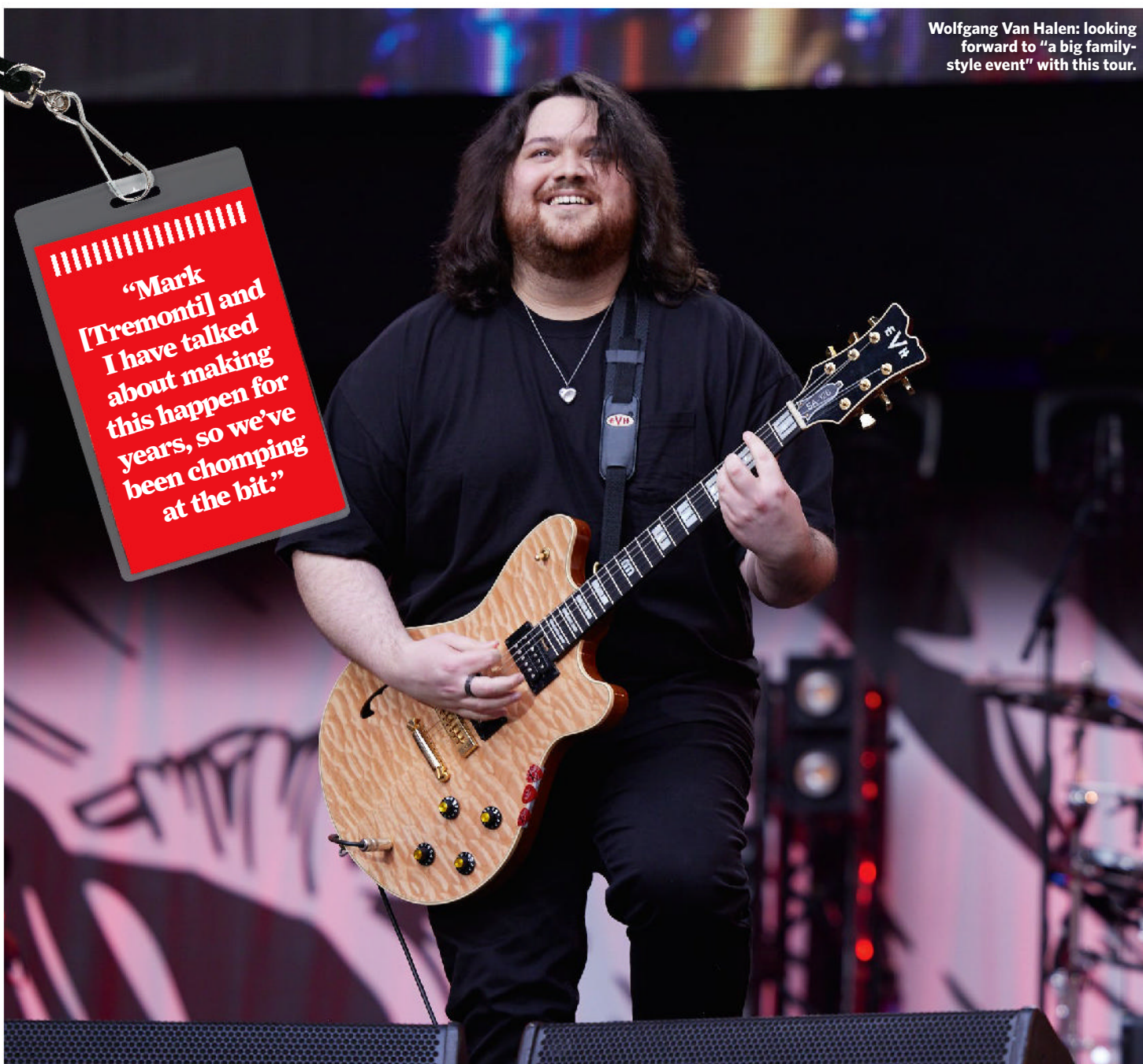
EDITED BY IAN FORTNAM (REVIEWS) AND DAVE LING (TOURS)

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Wolfgang Van Halen: looking forward to "a big family-style event" with this tour.



"Mark [Tremonti] and I have talked about making this happen for years, so we've been chomping at the bit."

Mammoth WVH

Wolfie Van Halen and co. play shows in December supporting Alter Bridge and Halestorm.

Now aged 31, Wolfgang Van Halen is the multi-instrumentalist and vocalist behind Mammoth WVH. Contrary to what many believe, it's not easy to build a career following in the footsteps of an illustrious father, but Edward Van Halen's son is making a good go of it.

Two nights ago you appeared at the Californian leg of the Taylor Hawkins tribute show, almost a month after its counterpart at Wembley Stadium. What was it like being a part of such a star-studded event?

Man, it was an honour to participate in either, let alone both of those shows. Taylor was one of my biggest inspirations when it comes to drumming – the drums are my first instrument.

How well did you know Taylor?

The one time I met him he came to a Van Halen show in 2012. My dad and I spoke to Taylor for almost two hours and he was just the sweetest guy. The news of his passing really broke me. Getting a call from Dave [Grohl], another inspiration of mine, to play the shows was a real shock.

You previously told *Classic Rock* that Dave Grohl's multi-instrumentalist talents inspired you to play everything on your debut album. Yeah, practically everything I do with Mammoth is inspired by Dave and the Foo's.

How do you think Dave's doing in the aftermath of Taylor's passing?

When you lose anyone that important to you... it's tough to say. I know from the experience with my pop, I'll never be okay. The wounds heal around it, but it's always kind of there. Man [going back even further, to Kurt Cobain], Dave has been through so much. I hope he can figure out a way to be okay, but it's not easy.

At the LA tribute show you were part of a band that played Van Halen's *Panama* and *Hot For Teacher*. At the London event *On Fire* replaced *Panama*, with The Darkness's Justin Hawkins on vocals.

Justin is a sweetheart. He's always been one of my favourite singers, and I loved the chance to hang out with him. We've really bonded. He's a great guy. And

I'd like to point out that Josh Freese, the drummer, is *the* drummer. People who might not know his name, but he played on literally *everything*. He's one of the best ever.

Your own performance at both shows was greeted with a lot of praise. You made those famous solos played by your father look relatively easy. *Guitar World* said you played them with "eerie accuracy".

Hearing those things are a huge compliment. Some people took it really far and said that I didn't actually do it at all.

Yeah, there were some crazy reports that you were miming.

[Laughing] The most obvious response is to consider that an insult, but I take it as even more of a compliment. You line up the solos, and there are times when I'm not even playing what's on the [original Van Halen] record. Preparing for those shows was really tough, because it forced me to go back and look through those songs. I still wasn't completely comfortable in doing that, emotionally speaking, so it took a lot.

Having played in Mark Tremonti's band Tremonti, you renew that friendship via a six-date UK and Irish tour with Alter Bridge and Halestorm.

Mark and I have talked about making this happen for years, so we've been chomping at the bit. I've been friends with Halestorm for so long, it will be a big family-style event.

Presumably the upcoming second Mammoth album will once again be produced by Michael 'Elvis' Baskette, who you have described as "my partner in all of this"?

Elvis is just two rooms away, getting the tape ready.

Last time you spoke to *Classic Rock*, when asked about a potential VH reunion you replied: "My father will always be the heart of Van Halen, I just don't see it happening." However, machinations along those lines *did* take place, but the plan was aborted after the news leaked. Is such a show still unlikely?

I think I already did it with Taylor. I feel closure because my part of the show was a tribute to my father. When it comes to Van Halen and entities surrounding the band, it's unfortunate, certainly compared to Foo Fighters, who have their shit together with inter-personal relationships. I don't know what it is with some bands, but certain personalities just can't get over themselves to work collectively for one purpose. That's been the curse of Van Halen for its entire career. So my playing at the Taylor shows delivered that catharsis without the stresses of dealing with the Van Halen camp and the players involved. Their camp is very dysfunctional – everyone! Hell, it was difficult to make plans even when the band was active.

Dave Lee Roth might be immovable, but a few days back Sammy Hagar told *Rolling Stone* that he "would love to play those songs again".

He said that, but he also said he wouldn't. Sammy said two different things. No... I feel that I've said my piece, and if the Taylor concerts are all that happens then I'm happy with that. **DL**

Alter Bridge's tour begins on December 5.



Gong

The far-out proggers prepare for Earth re-entry in November.

Kavus Torabi, hand-picked by the late, great Daavid Allen as his successor to lead Gong before losing a battle with cancer in 2015, sets the scene for a 15-date British tour.

Do you feel like live music is finally getting back to fairly close to 'normal'?

Back in March we did twenty-six shows with Gong and I've been busier with that band than ever before. Post-Brexit, touring in Europe is a nightmare. With so many forms to fill in it feels like being back at school. And in the UK the audiences actually seem to be getting younger, which is confusing but makes me happy.

Were you able to be creative during lockdown?

I think so. I wrote a book with [former world snooker champion and prog nut] Steve Davis called *Medical Grade Music*, and my other band Utopia Strong [the line-up of which includes Davis] did an album. But despite that it was the hardest two years of my life.

Two albums into your stewardship of Gong, how do you think the current group is being received?

This line-up has been together for eight years, it's the most stable of them all. We were always very keen to play our own stuff. Nobody – including Daavid – wanted it to turn into a tribute band. At the gigs, the percentage of new versus old material gradually increased. When we got back together again after lockdown it felt like something had changed. The band felt like *our* Gong. I can't explain why it happened, but Gong isn't like Black Sabbath or Deep Purple; it's a mythology. Even by 1975 there were no original members left.

That's an interesting development.

When I first joined, in the back of my mind I felt that people wondered: "Who's this wanker?" But it feels really, really comfortable now. This band has found its own audience.

Are Daavid and his late partner Gilli Smyth, who died in 2016, in your thoughts while on stage?

We think of them whenever we do anything. It would be stupid to try and guess what he would do in any given situation, but we definitely feel like we are honouring Daavid's vision.

How soon will there be a new Gong album?

We start recording it in December, but because of Brexit and the manufacturing industry it's hard to say when it will be released, unfortunately. Probably mid-to-late next year.

Co-headliners on this tour are Ozric Tentacles, now almost forty years old. People looking in from the outside will marvel that two bands steeped in the so-called counterculture continue to exist after so many decades.

It's amazing, isn't it? Ed [Wynne, Ozrics leader] is a visionary and an extraordinary guitar player. It's only his lack of arrogance that prevented him from being much wider known. I saw the Ozrics play with Hawkwind when I was sixteen and it completely blew my mind.

Besides your other group, Knifeworld, you are also a member of the Utopia Strong. What's the role of snooker legend Steve Davis in that band?

Steve plays modular synth in what is a very psychedelic trio. He has incredible musical taste and coaxes out incredible sounds from this instrument that I don't really understand. I've heard some terrible modular synth players, and Steve isn't one of them.

On paper Davis sounds like probably the most unlikely rock star you could possibly imagine.

He does [laughs]. But let me tell you, Steve is very different to the perceptions that people might have about him. **DL**

The tour runs from November 16 to December 3.



© TIM TONKOE/PRESS

Within Temptation

Catch them currently on tour until November 19 – especially if you’re a sucker for pyrotechnics.

Since forming in Holland back in 1996, over the past 26 years Within Temptation have risen to become one of the world’s biggest symphonic rock bands. Frontwoman Sharon den Adel explains how they did it.

The four upcoming dates you’re doing were originally going to take place in March. It must be a relief that they’re finally going ahead. Absolutely. It’s something that we have been looking forward to. This is winter time and the virus hasn’t gone away. Things could still go wrong, but I hope that they don’t.

While other bands performed via laptop in their living room or garage during lockdown, Within Temptation presented an immersive event called *The Aftermath*, which was set in a post-apocalyptic world and featured pristine audio and a lot of digital effects.

Well, we always like to do things big. We did a couple of smaller acoustic things and that was, like... nah [laughs]. *The Aftermath* wasn’t a real live show, but we wanted to give people something to dream about; to take them away to epic other worlds, to be fancy and bombastic and go the extra mile.

How was it getting to perform in front of live audiences again?

After so long being stuck at home at the start it was

a bit scary. Before the first show I started thinking of all the things that could go wrong. By the second one I had learned to relax a little and it soon became fun again.

These arena dates are in the company of Evanescence. Their singer Amy Lee once said that you and she “started talking about the meaning of life within minutes of meeting”. Amy grew up in America and I’m from Europe, but we have the same musical influences and we are both similar people. Amy is five or six years younger than I am, and we knew all about being the only girls in bands full of men in an industry dominated by men. We both knew about the loneliness of being on the road, and also the fun parts. We opened up to one another. It was really beautiful.

Resist, Within Temptation’s most recent album, introduced elements of electronic, industrial and pop music to the mix. It was also brave enough to address social and political issues.

As an artist you have to do what you believe is right. It felt right to discuss social dilemmas. Not talking about them doesn’t help anything!

You’ve also brought in several guest artists, including the rapper Xhibit. Did you care that some fans might have felt betrayed?

Not at all. Of course some people objected to that

song [*And We Run*], but it was liked by a whole lot more. I consider it among the best things we’ve done.

Within Temptation’s first UK show was back in 2004. It’s taken almost twenty years, but going from 1,145 fans at London’s Scala to the O2 Arena, which holds 20,000, is a huge leap. How did the band achieve that?

You must never lose track of your identity, but it’s also important to recognise what is contemporary. And we worked really, really hard. This was not handed to us; we were *always* on tour. And we did it in really small steps.

Your most recent album, *Resist*, was released as long ago as 2019, but there have been three singles, the latest of which was *Don’t Pray For Me* back in July. Have Within Temptation abandoned the ‘old’ model of the album?

No, there will be a new album next year – when it’s finished – but we have been experimenting with releasing singles, with more of those to come.

Tell us about the live show. Are there a lot of costume changes, and enough pyro to blow up a small desert island?

There are less costume changes than before, but the flames are still there. We love blowing things up. **DL**

The tour finishes on November 19.

THE GIG CARTEL PRESENTS

PLANET ROCK

KING KING



MARCH 2023 TOUR WITH SPECIAL GUEST GLENN TILBROOK

THU 02 GLASGOW BARROWLAND
 SAT 04 LEEDS 02 ACADEMY
 SUN 05 NEWCASTLE BOILER SHOP
 THU 09 LONDON ELECTRIC BALLROOM
 FRI 10 NORWICH WATERFRONT
 SAT 11 MANCHESTER ACADEMY
 SUN 12 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
 TUE 14 NEW BRIGHTON FLORAL PAVILION
 THU 16 CARDIFF Y PLAS
 FRI 17 WOLVERHAMPTON KK STEEL MILL
 SAT 18 OXFORD 02 ACADEMY
 SUN 19 BEXHILL DE LA WARR PAVILION
 WED 22 LEAMINGTON ASSEMBLY
 FRI 24 EXETER PHOENIX
 SAT 25 FROME CHEESE & GRAIN
 SUN 26 BOURNEMOUTH OLD FIRE STATION
 WED 29 CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION
 THU 30 BLACKBURN KING GEORGE'S HALL



ROBERT JON & THE WRECK

UK TOUR DATES - FEBRUARY 2023

08 SHEFFIELD CORPORATION
 09 CHESTER LIVE ROOMS
 10 LEAMINGTON ASSEMBLY
 12 BURY THE MET
 17 GLOUCESTER GUILDHALL

LIVE WIRE

THE AC/DC SHOW

25:11 WHITLEY BAY PLAYHOUSE
 09:12 WARRINGTON PARR HALL*
 10:12 COVENTRY HMV EMPIRE
 20:01 HOLMFIRTH PICTUREDROME
 21:01 CHESTER LIVE ROOMS
 27:01 BAKEWELL THORNBRIDGE BREWERY
 28:01 SALE WATERSIDE ARTS CENTRE
 04:02 LINCOLN ENGINE SHED
 17:02 BRISTOL 02 ACADEMY

*FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK SHOW WITH GUESTS THUNDERHAMMER

Ferocious Dog

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 18TH 2022
LEAMINGTON ASSEMBLY
WITH JOLLYROGER

FRIDAY DECEMBER 30TH 2022
HOLMFIRTH PICTUREDROME
END OF YEAR PARTY
WITH SHANGHAI TREASON & DAN OTTEWELL

SATURDAY MARCH 25TH 2023
SHEFFIELD CORPORATION

THE GIG CARTEL & PLANET ROCK BY ARRANGEMENT WITH ABS PRESENT



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#TONY WRIGHT
 #SARAH SCHORR
 #Hiram Mace

NOVEMBER

#24 NEWCASTLE BOILER SHOP
 #25 EDINBURGH QUEEN'S HALL
 #26 LYTHAM LOWTHER PAVILION
 #27 HOLMFIRTH THE PICTUREDROME

DECEMBER

#01 BURY ST EDMUNDS THE APEX
 #03 BEXHILL DE LA WARR PAVILION
 #04 ISLINGTON ASSEMBLY
 #08 OXFORD 02 ACADEMY
 #09 NORTHAMPTON ROADMENDER
 #10 MANCHESTER ACADEMY
 #11 NORWICH THE WATERFRONT
 #15 EXETER PHOENIX
 #16 FROME CHEESE & GRAIN
 #17 WOLVERHAMPTON KK'S STEEL MILL
 #18 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY

TICKETS: THEGIGCARTEL.COM | PLANETROCK.COM

FLEETWOOD MAC

THE FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE SHOW

FRI 18 NOV SHREWSBURY BUTTERMARKE
 SAT 19 NOV BANGOR PONTIO
 SAT 17 DEC CHESTER LIVE ROOMS
 FRI 27 JAN WHITLEY BAY PLAYHOUSE
 SAT 28 JAN CARLISLE OLD FIRE STATION
 FRI 03 FEB STAMFORD CORN EXC
 SAT 04 FEB MANCHESTER SALE WATERSIDE
 SAT 18 FEB HARPENDEN EMC
 FRI 17 MAR BURY ST EDS THE APEX
 SAT 25 MARCH BRISTOL 02 ACADEMY
 FRI 05 MAY BIRDWELL VENUE
 SAT 06 MAY BURNLEY MECHANICS
 FRI 12 MAY ISLINGTON 02 ACADEMY
 SAT 20 MAY NEWBURY ARLINGTON ARTS

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Musical Tales of Sin & Redemption, Murder Without Justice, and Love Without Limits



There is greatness within, and anyone who enjoys Americana style rock cannot afford to miss out on what is a true classic of the genre...Music rarely gets better than this.

—Kev Rowland, ReZonatZ

Sun King Rising is back with his highly anticipated second album, Signs & Wonders. With producer Ace Acker again at the helm, it is a masterpiece of Southern noir storytelling set to soaring and inspiring musical arrangements. The album's first single, No. 6 Magnolia Avenue, mines classic horn band pop in the vein of Chicago, Spiral Staircase, and Blood Sweat & Tears.



CD, LP, Digital Available World - PeacockSunrise Records

PeacockSunriseRecords.com | SunKingRising.com | SunKingRising.bandcamp.com

Tour Dates

BRYAN ADAMS

London O2 Arena Dec 14

AIRBOURNE, CROBOT, BLUES BILLS

Manchester Victoria Warehouse Dec 21
London Brixton Academy Dec 22

ALKATRAZZ, GIRLSCHOOL, TYTAN

Buckley Tivoli Feb 3
Blackpool Waterloo Music Bar Feb 4
Edinburgh Bannerman's Bar Feb 5
Bradford Nightrain Feb 7
Newcastle Trillians Feb 8
Stoke-on-Trent Eleven Feb 9
Bilston Robin 2 Feb 10
London Camden Underworld Feb 11

ALTER BRIDGE, HALESTORM, MAMMOTH WVH

Nottingham Motorpoint Arena Dec 5
Glasgow Hydro Arena Dec 6
Dublin 3 Arena Dec 8
Manchester AO Arena Dec 9
Birmingham Resorts World Arena Dec 11
London O2 Arena Dec 12

AMORPHIS, ELUVEITIE

Dublin Academy Nov 21
Glasgow QMU Nov 22
Manchester The Ritz Nov 23
London Kentish Town Forum Nov 24

ANIMALS AS LEADERS

Birmingham The Mill Jan 10
Glasgow Garage Jan 11
Manchester The Ritz Jan 12
London Shepherd's Bush Empire Jan 13

ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE

Tunbridge Wells Forum Dec 17

ATOMIC ROOSTER

London Gt Portland Street 229 Club Jan 29

BAD WOLVES

Manchester Academy III Dec 11
London Camden Underworld Dec 12
Birmingham Asylum Dec 13
Glasgow Cathouse Dec 14

ELLES BAILEY, CHANTEL MCGREGOR

Manchester Academy 3 Feb 4
Wavendon The Stables Feb 5
Leeds Brudenell Social Club Mar 17

BEAST IN BLACK, FIREWIND

London Islington Assembly Hall Feb 20
Birmingham Institute 2 Feb 21
Bristol The Fleece Feb 22
Manchester Rebellion Feb 23
Glasgow Cathouse Feb 24
Dublin Whelans Feb 25

KRIS BARRAS BAND, DEA MATRONA

Tavistock Wharf Jan 21
Gloucester Guildhall Jan 25
Bury St Edmunds The Apex Jan 26
Dover Booking Hall Jan 27
Barnsley Birdwell Venue Jan 29
Oxford The Bullingdon Jan 30
Exeter Phoenix Arts Centre Feb 1
Southampton The Brook Feb 2
Bournemouth Old Fire Station Feb 3
Bristol Thekla Feb 4
Tunbridge Wells Forum Feb 7
Milton Keynes Craufurd Arms Feb 8
Wolverhampton Steel Mill Feb 9
Buckley Tivoli Feb 11
Manchester Band On The Wall Feb 12
Newcastle Riverside Feb 13
Edinburgh The Caves Feb 15
Aberdeen The Tunnels Feb 16
Dundee Church Feb 17
Glasgow Cathouse Feb 18
Nottingham Rescue Rooms Feb 20
Hull The Welly Feb 22
Norwich Epic Studios Feb 23
Brighton Chalk Feb 24
London Highbury Garage Feb 25

BIFFY CLYRO, ARCHITECTS

Birmingham Resorts World Arena Nov 11
London O2 Arena Nov 12
Cardiff Motorpoint Arena Nov 14
Bournemouth BIC Nov 15

BLACKBERRY SMOKE, READ SOUTHAIR BAND

Birmingham Academy Mar 26

Glasgow Academy Mar 27
Belfast Telegraph Building Mar 29
Dublin Olympia Mar 30
London Chalk Farm Roundhouse Apr 1
Manchester Academy Apr 2

BLACK FLAG, TOTAL CHAOS

Sheffield Academy Jan 24
Wolverhampton KK's Steel Mill Jan 25
Glasgow Garage Jan 26
Manchester The Ritz Jan 27
London Kentish Town Forum Jan 28

BLACK STAR RIDERS, MICHAEL MONROE, PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS

Nottingham Rock City Feb 13
Norwich UEA Feb 15
Ipswich Corn Exchange Feb 16
Manchester The Ritz Feb 17
Wolverhampton KK's Steel Mill Feb 18
Leeds Academy Feb 19
Cardiff Tramshed Feb 21
Bristol Academy Feb 22
Glasgow SWG3 Feb 23
Newcastle City Hall Feb 24
London Shepherd's Bush Empire Feb 26

BLINK 182, THE STORY SO FAR

Glasgow The Hydro Sep 2
Belfast SSE Arena Sep 4
Dublin 3Arena Sep 5
London O2 Arena Oct 11, 12
Birmingham Utilita Arena Oct 14
Manchester AO Arena Oct 15

JOE BONAMASSA

Bournemouth BIC May 9
Blackpool Opera House May 10
Leeds First Direct Arena May 12
Newcastle Utilita Arena May 13
Birmingham Utilita Arena May 14

BONHAM-BULLICK

London Holborn Pizza Express Jan 12
Emsworth St James' Hall Jan 14
Sedgefield Blues Club Apr 14
Lowdham Village Hall Apr 15

BRAVE RIVAL

Doncaster The Leopard Nov 12
Grimsby Yardbirds Club Nov 18

BROTHER FIRETRIBE, ONE DESIRE, STRALE

Manchester Academy 3 Mar 29
Birmingham Asylum Mar 30
London Camden Underworld Mar 31

DANNY BRYANT

Derby Flowerpot Feb 10
Sheffield Greystones Feb 11
Barnoldswick Arts Centre Feb 16
Kinross Green Hotel Feb 18
Hartlepool South Durham WMC May 27

BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE, JINGER, ATREYU

Cambridge Corn Exchange Feb 26
Bristol Academy Feb 28
Liverpool Mountford Hall Mar 1
Newcastle City Hall Mar 3
Glasgow Barrowland Mar 4
Leeds Academy Mar 6
Birmingham Academy Mar 7
Southampton Guildhall Mar 8
Swansea Arena Mar 10
London Chalk Farm Roundhouse Mar 11

FRANCK CARDUCCI & THE FANTASTIC SQUAD

Wigan Old Courts Dec 9
London Gt Portland Street 229 Club Dec 10
Bilston Robin 2 Dec 11

CLUTCH

Glasgow Academy Nov 11
Newcastle City Hall Nov 12
Leeds Academy Nov 13
Exeter Great Hall Nov 15
Brighton Dome Nov 16
Bristol Academy Dec 13
Birmingham Academy Dec 14
Manchester Academy Dec 15
Nottingham Rock City Dec 16
London Chalk Farm Roundhouse Dec 17

HUGH CORNWELL

Cardiff Y Plas Nov 11

JOE BONAMASSA



While the prolific bluesman's records certainly show his class, as with most artists catching him live is really where it's at.

See below for dates. Currently May 9 to May 14.

Brighton Concorde Nov 12
Bristol The Fleece Nov 13
Lincoln Platform Nov 16
Bury St Edmunds Apex Nov 17
Newcastle Wylam Brewery Nov 18
Leeds Brudenell Social Club Nov 19
Chester Live Rooms Nov 20
Southend-on-Sea Chinnerys Nov 23
London Islington Assembly Hall Nov 24
Bilston Robin 2 Nov 25
Manchester Gorilla Nov 26
Derby The Venue Nov 27
Carlisle Old Fire Station Nov 30
Edinburgh La Belle Angele Dec 1
Glasgow Garage Dec 2
Aberdeen Lemon Tree Dec 3
Nottingham Rescue Rooms Dec 5
Norwich Waterfront Dec 6

CROBOT

Bristol The Fleece Nov 21
Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms Nov 22
Nottingham Rescue Rooms Nov 23
Glasgow Cathouse Nov 24
Wolverhampton KK's Steel Mill Nov 25

ROSALIE CUNNINGHAM

Northampton Black Prince Nov 11

THE CURE

Dublin 3 Arena Dec 1
Belfast SSE Arena Dec 2
Glasgow The Hydro Dec 4
Leeds First Direct Arena Dec 6
Birmingham Utilita Arena Dec 7
Cardiff Motorpoint Arena Dec 8
London Wembley Arena Dec 11-13

THE DARKNESS, BLACK STONE CHERRY

Cardiff Motorpoint Arena Jan 28
Liverpool M&S Bank Arena Jan 29
Glasgow OVO Arena Jan 30
Birmingham Resorts World Arena Jan 31
Manchester AO Arena Feb 2
Leeds First Direct Arena Feb 3
London Wembley Arena Feb 4

THE DEAD DAISIES, FM, GRAHAM BONNET BAND

Nottingham Rock City Dec 3
Manchester The Ritz Dec 4
London Kentish Town Forum Dec 6
Wolverhampton KK's Steel Mill Dec 7
Dublin Academy Dec 10
Belfast Limelight Dec 11
Edinburgh Academy Dec 13
Bristol SWX Dec 15

DEPECHE MODE

London Twickenham Stadium Jun 17

REBECCA DOWNES

Skegness Rock & Blues Festival Jan 13
Darlington The Forum Feb 17
Kinross Green Hotel Feb 18

DROPKICK MURPHYS, PENNYWISE, THE INTERRUPTERS

Belfast Telegraph Building Jan 13
Dublin 3 Arena Jan 14

Newcastle City Hall Jan 16
Glasgow The Hydro Jan 17
Manchester Victoria Warehouse Jan 18
Cardiff Motorpoint Arena Jan 20
London Wembley Arena Jan 21
Birmingham Academy Jan 22

FRANCIS DUNNERY'S IT BITES

Glasgow Saint Luke's Jan 19
Wolverhampton KK's Steel Mill Jan 20
Manchester Club Academy Jan 21
London Shepherd's Bush Bush Hall Jan 22

ENUFF Z'NUFF

Belfast Voodoo Nov 11
Crumlin The Patriot Nov 12
Bilston Robin 2 Nov 13
Edinburgh Bannerman's Bar Nov 15
Sheffield Corporation Nov 16

EPICA, APOCALYPTICA, WHEEL

Bristol Academy Jan 31
Nottingham Rock City Feb 1
Glasgow Academy Feb 2
Manchester Academy Feb 3
London Chalk Farm Roundhouse Feb 4

Recommended

EVANESCENCE, WITHIN TEMPTATION

London O2 Arena Nov 14
Birmingham Utilita Arena Nov 15
Glasgow The Hydro Nov 17
Leeds First Direct Arena Nov 19

FOCUS

Gateshead The Sage Nov 11
Kinross Green Hotel Nov 12, 13
Ely Maltings Nov 21
Southampton 1865 Nov 23
Bilston Robin 2 Nov 24
Falmouth Princess Pavilion Nov 25
Lewes Conservative Club Nov 26
London Chelsea Under The Bridge Apr 20

FOZZY, ESCAPE THE FATE, SCARLET REBELS

Bournemouth Academy Nov 11
Bristol Academy Nov 12
Glasgow SWG3 Nov 13
London Kentish Town Forum Nov 14

FROST*

Wolverhampton KK's Steel Mill Nov 27
Edinburgh Queens Hall Nov 28
Leeds Brudenell Social Club Nov 29
Bath Komedia Nov 30
London Islington Academy Dec 1

GONG, OZRIC TENTACLES

Leicester Academy 2 Nov 16
Brighton Concorde 2 Nov 17
Sheffield Academy 2 Nov 18
Liverpool Academy 2 Nov 19
Bristol Trinity Nov 20
London Camden Electric Ballroom Nov 23
Oxford Academy 2 Nov 24

BACK TO LIVE

ROCK
RECOMMENDS

Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Nov 25
Manchester	Academy 2	Nov 26
Glasgow	Grange	Nov 27
Birmingham	Academy 2	Nov 29
Norwich	Epic Studios	Nov 30
Cambridge	Junction	Dec 1
Falmouth	Princess Pavilion	Dec 2
Bournemouth	Old Fire Station	Dec 3

GUN

Bradford	Nightrain	Nov 30
London	Islington Academy	Dec 1
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Dec 2
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Dec 4
Bath	Komedia	Dec 5
Sunderland	Firestation	Dec 6
Galashiels	Mac Arts Centre	Dec 7
Glasgow	Barrowland	Dec 10
Aberdeen	Lemon Tree	Dec 11
Newport	Patriot	Mar 31
Narberth	Queens Hall	Apr 1
Buckley	Tivoli	Apr 2

HAKEN, BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME

Bristol	SWX	Mar 23
Manchester	Academy 2	Mar 24
Glasgow	Garage	Mar 25
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Mar 26

STEVE HARLEY & COCKNEY REBEL

Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Dec 10
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Dec 11
Bury St Edmunds	Apex	Dec 16
Cheltenham	Town Hall	Dec 19
Birmingham	Town Hall	Dec 20
Manchester	RNCM	Dec 22

THE HU

Manchester	Academy	Nov 28
Leeds	Stylus	Nov 30
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 1
Cardiff	Great Hall	Dec 2
Birmingham	Institute	Dec 3
Dublin	Olympia	Dec 5
Belfast	Ulster Hall	Dec 6
Glasgow	SWG3	Dec 7
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Dec 9

IN FLAMES, AT THE GATES, IMMINENCE, ORBIT CULTURE

London	Brixton Academy	Nov 20
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INME, RAGING SPEEDHORN

Newcastle	St Dominic's Catholic Club	Nov 25
Leeds	Boom	Nov 26
Glasgow	Cathouse	Nov 27
Manchester	Rebellion	Nov 28
Bristol	Thekla	Nov 30
Plymouth	Junction	Dec 1
London	Highbury Garage	Dec 2
Birmingham	Asylum	Dec 3
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Dec 4
Chester	Live Rooms	Dec 6
Swansea	Sin City	Dec 7
Southampton	The Loft	Dec 8
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Dec 9
Dover	Booking Hall	Dec 10
Brighton	Patterns	Dec 11

IRON MAIDEN

Dublin	3 Arena	Jun 24
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jun 26
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Jun 28
Manchester	AO Arena	Jun 30
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Jul 3
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Jul 4
London	O2 Arena	Jul 7, 8

ELTON JOHN

London	O2 Arena	Jun 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, May 30
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Apr 19
Manchester	AO Arena	May 31, Jun 2, 3
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Jun 6
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Jun 8, 10, 11
Aberdeen	PJ Live	Jun 13, 15
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jun 17, 18

ROBERT JON & THE WRECK, MEGHAN PARNELL & DAVE BARNES

Cardiff	Earl Haig Memorial Club	Feb 7
Sheffield	Corporation	Feb 8
Chester	Live Rooms	Feb 9
Leamington	The Assembly	Feb 10
London	Camden PowerHaus	Feb 11
Bury	The Met	Feb 12
Edinburgh	Voodoo Rooms	Feb 13
Aberdeen	Tunnels	Feb 14
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Feb 15
Hartlepool	South Durham Steel Works	Feb 16
Gloucester	Guildhall	Feb 17
Sittingbourne	Bourne Music Club	Feb 18

CHEZ KANE

Sheffield	Corporation	Nov 18
Glasgow	Ivory Blacks	Nov 19
Cannock	The Station	Nov 22

KARNIVOOL

Bristol	Academy	Feb 3
Glasgow	Garage	Feb 5
Manchester	Academy	Feb 7
Leeds	Stylus	Feb 8
London	Kentish Town Forum	Feb 9
Birmingham	Institute	Feb 10

KATATONIA, SÓLSTAFIR

London	Kentish Town Forum	Feb 10
Manchester	The Ritz	Feb 11
Bristol	SWX	Feb 12
Glasgow	Garage	Feb 13
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Feb 14

CORKY LAING PLAYS MOUNTAIN

London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Nov 15
Oxford	The Bullingdon	Nov 16
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Nov 17
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Nov 18
Sedgefield	Parish Hall	Nov 19
Whitby	Blues, Rhythm & Rock Festival	Nov 20

LAMB OF GOD, KREATOR, THY ART IS MURDER, GATECREEPER

London	Brixton Academy	Dec 13
Glasgow	Academy	Dec 14
Birmingham	Academy	Dec 15
Bristol	Academy	Dec 16
Manchester	Academy	Dec 18

LEPROUS

London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Feb 7
Glasgow	Slay	Feb 8
Manchester	The Ritz	Feb 9
Bristol	SWX	Feb 10

LIFE OF AGONY, MADBALL, TARAH WHO?

London	Tufnell Park Dome	Feb 3
Birmingham	Asylum	Feb 4
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Feb 5
Manchester	Club Academy	Feb 7
Glasgow	Garage	Feb 8
Southampton	1865	Feb 10
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Feb 11

AYNSLEY LISTER, RIK READ BAND, RAMBLIN' PREACHERS

London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Jan 31
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LONELY ROBOT

London	Islington Assembly Hall	Feb 8
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LONG DISTANCE CALLING

Manchester	Rebellion	Feb 14
London	Tufnell Park Boston Music Room	Feb 15

THE LONG RYDERS

London	Gt Portland Street 229 Club	May 20
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NICK LOWE

London	Kensington Nell's	Nov 17-19, 24-26
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ERJA LYYTINEN, CHANTEL MCGREGOR

Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Feb 3
Wavendon	The Stables	Feb 5
Bilston	Robin 2	Feb 6
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Feb 11

MAGNUM

Bristol	The Fleece	Dec 5
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Dec 6
Cardiff	Tramshed	Dec 7
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Dec 10

CHANTEL MCGREGOR

Derby	Flowerpot	Nov 10
Whitby	Rocks Festival	Nov 18
St Helens	Citadel	Nov 26
Sevenoaks	Stag Theatre	Dec 9

MARCO MENDOZA

Bathgate	Dreadnought	Nov 11
Lancaster	The Pub	Nov 12
London	Camden Underworld	Nov 13

MOGWAI

Aberdeen	Music Hall	Dec 20
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Dec 21
Glasgow	Barrowland Ballroom	Dec 22, 23
Manchester	Albert Hall	Feb 10
Leeds	Academy	Feb 11
Gateshead	The Sage	Feb 12
Nottingham	Rock City	Feb 14
Bath	Forum	Feb 15
Cardiff	Great Hall	Feb 16
Brighton	Dome	Feb 17
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Feb 18
Birmingham	Institute	Feb 19

MOLLY HATCHET

Buckley	The Tivoli	Nov 24
Bradford	Nightrain	Nov 25
Troon	Winterstorm Festival	Nov 26
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Nov 11

BLACK STONE CHERRY



It's little wonder that the rockin' Kentucky quartet are a big draw live. Catch them co-headlining with The Darkness.

See previous page for dates. Currently January 28 to February 4.

London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Nov 28
Fletching	Trading Boundaries	Nov 29

Recommended

MUSE

Plymouth	Home Park	May 27
Huddersfield	John Smith's Stadium	Jun 20
Glasgow	Bellahouston Park	Jun 23
Milton Keynes	National Bowl	Jun 25

NEW MODEL ARMY

Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 9
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Dec 10

THE NEW ROSES

London	Camden Underworld	Dec 1
Cardiff	The Globe	Dec 2
Sheffield	Winter Rocks Festival	Dec 3

NIGHTWISH, BEAST IN BLACK, TURMION KÄILÖT

London	Wembley Arena	Nov 21
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Nov 22
Dublin	3 Arena	Nov 23

OPETH, VOIVOD

London	Hammersmith Apollo	Nov 18
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ORANGE GOBLIN

London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Dec 16
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PAPA ROACH, DON BROCO

Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Mar 21
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Mar 23
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Mar 24
London	Alexandra Palace	Mar 25

STEPHEN DALE PETIT

London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Feb 28
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PLACEBO

Portsmouth	Guildhall	Nov 18
Brighton	Centre	Nov 19
Liverpool	Olympia	Nov 21
Manchester	Victoria Warehouse	Nov 22
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 24
London	Brixton Academy	Nov 26, 27
Leicester	De Montfort Hall	Nov 29
Leeds	Academy	Nov 30
Newcastle	City Hall	Dec 2
Glasgow	Academy	Dec 3
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Dec 7
Birmingham	Academy	Dec 8

PORCUPINE TREE

London	Wembley Arena	Nov 11
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QUIREBOYS

Coventry	Empire 2	Apr 20
Brighton	Patterns	Apr 21
Dover	Booking Hall	Apr 22
Stockton-on-Tees	Georgian Theatre	Apr 27
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Apr 28
Chesterfield	Real Time	Apr 29
Cardiff	Clwb Ifor Bach	May 4

Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	May 5
Norwich	Waterfront Studio	May 6
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	May 11
Glasgow	Oran Mor	May 12
Newcastle	The Cluny	May 13
Manchester	Night & Day Café	May 18
Birmingham	Castle & Falcon	May 19
Bristol	The Exchange	May 20
London	Kentish Town Forum	Sep 2

FÉLIX RABIN

Hull	Adelphi	Nov 22
Grimby	Yarbirds Club	Nov 23
Barnoldswick	Arts Centre	Nov 24
Keighley	Studio 5 Live	Nov 25
Doncaster	The Leopard	Nov 26
Kinross	Green Hotel	Nov 27
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Nov 28
Leicester	The Musician	Nov 29
Leamington Spa	Temperance	Nov 30
London	Kensington Nell's	Dec 1
Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Dec 4

RAVEN

Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Mar 2
Newcastle	St Dom's	Mar 3
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Mar 4
Machynlleth	Red Lion	Mar 5
Birmingham	Asylum	Mar 7
Great Yarmouth	Hard Rock Hell	Mar 8
Bradford	Nightrain	Mar 9
Crumlin	The Patriot	Mar 10
London	Camden Black Heart	Mar 11
Nuneaton	Queen's Hall	Mar 12

SAXON, DIAMOND HEAD

Ipswich	Regent	Nov 11
Southampton	Guildhall	Nov 12
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Nov 13
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Nov 14
Bath	Forum	Nov 15
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Nov 16
Newcastle	City Hall	Nov 18
Blackburn	King's George Hall	Nov 19
Aberdeen	Music Hall	Nov 20
Glasgow	Barrowland	Nov 21
Hull	City Hall	Nov 22
York	Barbican	Nov 23
Leicester	De Montfort Hall	Nov 25
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Nov 26

JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR

Cardiff	Tramshed	Nov 22
Exeter	Corn Exchange	Nov 23
Reading	Hexagon	Nov 25
Hastings	White Rock Theatre	Nov 26
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Nov 28
Birmingham	Town Hall	Nov 30
Newcastle	Tyne Theatre & Opera House	Dec 1
Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	Dec 2
Sheffield	City Hall	Dec 4
Wavendon	The Stables	Dec 5
Portsmouth	Guildhall	Dec 7
Stroud	Subscription Rooms	Dec 9
Ipswich	Corn Exchange	Dec 10
High Wycombe	Old Town Hall	Dec 11

KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD

Warrington	Parr Hall	Apr 18
Edinburgh	Queens Hall	Apr 19

KATIA ORINI

IRON MAIDEN



Closing in on 50 years in metal and arguably still top of the pile (check the ticket sales), here they come again.

See opposite page for dates. Currently June 24 to July 8.

Newcastle	Tyne Theatre	Apr 20
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Apr 21
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Apr 22
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Apr 23

SHINEDOWN, ASKING ALEXANDRIA, ZERO 9:36

Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 26
Manchester	Apollo	Nov 27
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 29
Glasgow	Academy	Nov 30
London	Wembley Arena	Dec 1

SIKTH, PALM READER

Manchester	Academy 2	Nov 25
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Nov 26

SKID ROW, COLLATERAL

Norwich	Epic Studios	Nov 18
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SPEAR OF DESTINY

Bedford	Esquires	Dec 9
Darwen	Library Theatre	Dec 10
Worcester	Marrs Bar	Dec 11
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Dec 13
Newcastle	The Cluny	Dec 14
Glasgow	King Tut's Wah Wah Hut	Dec 15
Dunfermline	PJ Molloys	Dec 16
Manchester	Academy	Dec 17

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & THE E STREET BAND

Dublin	RDS Arena	May 5, 7
Edinburgh	Murrayfield Stadium	May 30
Birmingham	Villa Park	Jun 16
London	Hyde Park BST Festival	Jul 6, 8

STATUS QUO

Aberdeen	P&J Live	Nov 25
Glasgow	SECC	Nov 26
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Nov 28
Brighton	Centre	Nov 30
Bournemouth	BIC	Dec 1
London	Wembley Arena	Dec 3

ROD STEWART

Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 16
London	O2 Arena	Nov 22, 25
Glasgow	The Hydro	Nov 29
Aberdeen	P&J Live	Dec 2
Glasgow	The Hydro	Dec 3
Liverpool	M&S Bank Arena	Dec 6
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Dec 9, 10
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Dec 13
Manchester	AO Arena	Dec 14
Newcastle	Utilita Arena	Dec 17

STONE BROKEN

Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Dec 16
Edinburgh	La Belle Angele	Feb 8
Liverpool	Academy 2	Feb 9
Huddersfield	The Parish	Feb 10
Stoke-on-Trent	Sugarhill	Feb 11
Swansea	Sin City	Feb 13
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Feb 14
Hertford	Corn Exchange	Feb 16
Dover	Booking Hall	Feb 17
Tunbridge Wells	Forum	Feb 18
Bournemouth	Old Fire Station	Feb 19
Guildford	Boilerroom	Feb 21
Oxford	Academy 2	Feb 22
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Feb 23

SWEET

Newcastle	Boiler Shop	Nov 24
Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	Nov 25
Lytham	Lowther Pavilion Theatre	Nov 26
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Nov 27
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Dec 1
Trecco Bay	Planet Rockstock	Dec 2
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Dec 3
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Dec 4
Oxford	Academy	Dec 8
Northampton	Roadmender	Dec 9
Manchester	Academy	Dec 10
Norwich	Waterfront	Dec 11
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Dec 15
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Dec 16
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Dec 17
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 18

SWEET CRISIS

Chelmsford	Hot Box	Nov 11
Newcastle	Trillians	Nov 16
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Nov 17
Llandudno	Motorsport Lounge	Nov 18
Manchester	Eagle Inn	Nov 19
Sittingbourne	Bourne Music Club	Nov 25

THERAPY?, REWS

Falmouth	Princess Pavilion	Nov 11
Dover	Booking Hall	Nov 17
Bournemouth	Sound Circus	Nov 18
Guildford	Casino	Nov 19
Swansea	Sin City	Nov 20
Bedford	Esquires	Nov 20

Liverpool	Academy 2	Dec 1
Huddersfield	Parish	Dec 2
Swindon	Level 3	Dec 3
Colchester	Arts Center	Dec 14
Stoke-on-Trent	The Sugarhill	Dec 15
Southend-on-Sea	Chinnerys	Dec 16

THOSE DAMNED CROWS

Leeds	Key Club	Feb 17
Manchester	Academy 3	Feb 18
Newcastle	Riverside	Feb 19
Glasgow	Garage	Feb 21
Bradford	Nightrain	Feb 22
London	Slington Assembly Hall	Feb 24
Swansea	Arena	Feb 25

MARK TREMONTI SINGS SINATRA

London	IndigO2	Dec 15
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TRIVIUM, HEAVEN SHALL BURN

Glasgow	Academy	Jan 12
Birmingham	Academy	Jan 13
Manchester	Victoria Warehouse	Jan 14
London	Brixton Academy	Jan 15

TYGERS OF PAN TANG

Norwich	Waterfront	Nov 11
London	Camden Black Heart	Nov 12

VILLE VALO

Bristol	Academy	Mar 10
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 11
Glasgow	Garage	Mar 13
Manchester	The Ritz	Mar 14
London	Kentish Town Forum	Mar 15

DANNY VAUGHN (UNPLUGGED)

Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Nov 24
Glasgow	The Attic	Nov 25
Ballymena	The Diamond	Nov 26
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Nov 27
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Dec 1
Newport	The Patriot	Dec 2
Newcastle	The Cluny	Dec 3
London	Highbury The Grace	Dec 4
Bilston	Robin 2	Dec 6
Sheffield	Local Authority	Dec 8
Bradford	Nightrain	Dec 9

VOLBEAT, SKINDRED, NAPALM DEATH

Dublin	3 Arena	Dec 12
Glasgow	The Hydro	Dec 15
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Dec 16
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Dec 17
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Dec 19
London	Wembley Arena	Dec 20

Recommended

VON HERTZEN BROTHERS

Manchester	Night & Day Café	Feb 1
London	Highbury Garage	Feb 2

RICK WAKEMAN, THE ENGLISH ROCK ENSEMBLE, THE ENGLISH CHAMBER CHOIR

London	Palladium	Feb 22, 23
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RICK WAKEMAN'S GRUMPY CHRISTMAS STOCKING

Croydon	Ashcroft Theatre	Nov 24
Dartford	Orchard Theatre	Nov 27
Newcastle	Tyne Theatre	Nov 29
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	Nov 30
Poole	Lighthouse	Dec 2
Bath	Forum	Dec 3
Barnstaple	Queen's Theatre	Dec 4
Swansea	Grand Theatre	Dec 5
Cheltenham	Town Hall	Dec 6
Birmingham	Town Hall	Dec 8
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Dec 10
Hanley	Victoria Hall	Dec 11
York	Barbican	Dec 13
Blackburn	King George's Hall	Dec 14
Buxton	Opera House	Dec 16
Ipswich	Corn Exchange	Dec 17
Worthing	Assembly Hall	Dec 21

W.A.S.P.

Manchester	Academy	Mar 17
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Mar 18
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 19
Glasgow Academy	Mar 21	
Newcastle	City Hall	Mar 22
Bristol	Academy	Mar 23
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Mar 24
Dublin	National Stadium	Mar 25
Belfast	Ulster Hall	Mar 26

ROGER WATERS

Birmingham	Utilita Arena	May 31
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jun 2
London	O2 Arena	Jun 6, 7

THESE WICKED RIVERS

Stafford	Top Of The World	Dec 11
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WILLE & THE BANDITS

Plymouth	The Box	Feb 9
Truro	The Old Bakery	Feb 10
Bridport	Arts Centre	Feb 11
Southampton	1865	Feb 12
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Feb 23
Bristol	Thekla	Feb 24
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Feb 25
Glasgow	Hug And Pint	Mar 1
Kinross	Green Hotel	Mar 2
Edinburgh	Voodoo Rooms	Mar 3
Newcastle Upon-Tyne	The Cluny	Mar 4
Worcester	Drummonds	Mar 9
Manchester	Deaf Institute	Mar 10
Nottingham	Bodega Social Club	Mar 11
Oxford	Bullingdon Arms	Mar 16
Cardiff	Clwb Ifor Bach	Mar 17
Birmingham	Actress & Bishop	Mar 18
Sheffield	The Greystones	Mar 19

DAMIAN WILSON & ADAM WAKEMAN

Settle	Victoria Hall	Jan 25
Glasgow	Eastwood Park Theatre	Jan 26
Inverness	One Touch Theatre	Jan 27
Aberdeen	Arts Centre	Jan 28
Kinross	Green Hotel	Jan 29
Stafford	MET Studio	Jan 31
Windsor	Old Court	Feb 1
Ardley	Manor Farm	Feb 2
Wavendon	The Stables	Feb 3
Walton-on-Thames	Riverhouse Barn	Feb 5
London	Pizza Express Live	Feb 6
Fletching	Trading Boundaries	Feb 10
Port Erin	Arts Centre	Feb 24
Peel	Centenary Hall	Feb 25
Leicester	The Musician	Feb 28
Bath	Chapel Arts Centre	Mar 1
Cardiff	Acapela Studio	Mar 2
Ilfracombe	Landmark Theatre	Mar 3
Mylor	Tremayne Hall	Mar 4
Torrington	Plough Arts Centre	Mar 5

WISHBONE ASH

Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Nov 11
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Nov 12
Aberdare	Coliseum Theatre	Nov 13
Gloucester	Guildhall	Nov 15
Leamington Spa	Assembly	Nov 16
Liverpool	Academy	Nov 17
Buxton	Opera House	Nov 18
Derby	The Venue	Nov 19

ZEAL & ARDOR

Glasgow	Oran Mór	Nov 11
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Nov 13
London	Brixton Electric	Nov 13

YES

Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Jun 10
Southend-on-Sea	Cliffs Pavilion	Jun 11
York	Barbican	Jun 12
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Jun 14
Gateshead	The Sage	Jun 15
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	Jun 16
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Jun 18
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Jun 20

Festivals

ALFORD ROCK & BLUES FESTIVAL FOCUS, BAND OF FRIENDS, JACKIE LYNTON, MORE

Alford	Springbok Estate	Jun 30-Jul 2
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CHELSEA BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL TEN YEARS AFTER, CATFISH, BRAVE RIVAL, MORE

London	Shepherd's Bush Bush Hall	May 21
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DESERTFEST UNCLE ACID & THE DEADBEATS, GRAVEYARD, KADOVAR, MORE

London	Camden, various venues	May 5-7
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HARD ROCK HELL NWOCR SCREAMING EAGLES, TRUCKER DIABLO, WHEN RIVERS MEET, MORE

Leicester	Academy	Jan 21, 22
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HARD ROCK HELL PROG JOHN PAYNE'S ASIA, THE FLOWER KINGS, MORE

Sheffield	Academy	Apr 14, 15
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HARD ROCK HELL SPRING BREAK HOUSE OF LORDS, CRASHDIET, CANDLEMASS, MORE

Great Yarmouth	Vauxhall Holiday Park	Mar 8-12
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LEEDS BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL LAURENCE JONES, XANDER & THE PEACE PIRATES, CATFISH, MORE

Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Feb 26
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MAYORS ROCK FEST THESE WICKED RIVERS, THE HOT DAMN!, GORILLA RIOT, MORE

Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Apr 8, 9
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PROGNOSIS RIVERSIDE, VOIVOD, SOEN, MORE

London	IndigO2	Apr 22, 23
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STOCKTON BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL TEN YEARS AFTER, MORE

Stockton-on-Tees	The ARC	May 13
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WHITBY BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL AYNSLEY LISTER, CORKY LAING, ELLES BAILEY, MORE

Whitby	Pavilion	Nov 19, 20
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WINTER'S END FESTIVAL THE TANGENT, RWPL, KNIGHT AREA, MORE

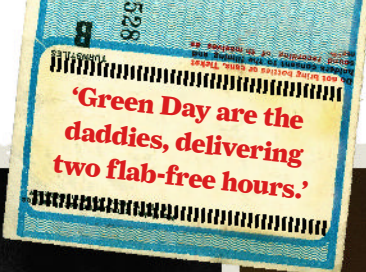
Chepstow	Drill Hall	Mar 30-Apr 2
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WINTERSTORM FESTIVAL VANDENBERG, MOLLY HATCHET, BLAZE BAYLEY, MORE

Tron	Concert Hall	Nov 25, 26
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BACK TO LIVE

Axl Rose and GN'R deliver in a three-hour set.



Green Day: subversive ideas and have a whole lotta fun.

Måneskin: another band who have a 'Freddie moment'.



Rock In Rio

Rio De Janeiro Barra Olympic Park

Guns N' Roses opening on time, giant rabbits, roller-coasters and more at the biggest rock'n'roll extravaganza on the planet.

★ When in Rio, do as Freddie might do. At the scene of Queen's most legendary show, at the inaugural 1985 Rock In Rio festival, everybody wants their slice of Mercury magic. **The Offspring** make the obvious gesture: between their Californian punk *Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da* (*Why Don't You Get A Job?*) and their Californian punk *Smells Like Teen Spirit* (*Self Esteem*), guitarist Noodles lets a life-affirming "Dee-da-deee-o" fly. **Måneskin**, Italy's breakout Eurovision winners, lead Rock In Rio 2022 in a stripped-back snippet of Queen's *Love Of My Life*, a sonic breakwater between their first half hour as a full-throttle pastiche of Zep rock and their second as a wild-ass covers band doing *I Wanna Be Your Dog* and *My Generation* while writhing on each other and smashing everything.

Rock In Rio has come a long way since Freddie's day, though. The City Of Rock has grown into what's probably the greatest rock'n'roll spectacle on Earth. It boasts a full-sized roller-coaster, a boulevard of Mediterranean architecture named Rock Street, nightly firework spectacles, and its own musical on an operatic scale, in which golden bird-women fly up the cascading waterfalls of a full-scale cliff face.

The line-up is a pretty earth-shattering too. Last weekend saw a rather one-sided face-off between Iron Maiden and Justin Bieber. **Guns N' Roses** open the second weekend with alarming punctuality. Beneath a barrage of trash-art visuals they strike

a pace with *It's So Easy* and *Mr Brownstone* that would be impossible to maintain for their full allotted three hours. And so it proves. As Slash works his vertical guitar neck like a stripper's pole and Axl Rose waltzes with himself or winds his hips with the sensuality of a retirement home 1950s night, they settle into a rhythm. Stretches of sludge-rock like the half-baked *Chinese Democracy*, *Rocket Queen* or anthemic battle hymn *Civil War*, played beneath a Ukrainian flag. A monster Slash solo. Then, roughly every half hour, a lightning bolt of rock legend: *Welcome To The Jungle* with a Link Wray intro, a rejuvenating *You Could Be Mine* or a bolt-from-the-blue *Sweet Child O' Mine*. Duff McKagan taking the mic for a brisk blast through *The Misfits' Attitude* is a stiffener too, and in the final stretch all stylistic bets are off. A bombastic *November Rain* gives way to an incongruous, faithfully gentle *Wichita Lineman*; an acoustic instrumental *Blackbird* opens an encore that's then somehow got to make it, via *Patience*, to a *Paradise City* that's getting riff-fracked to oblivion. Indulgent, sure, but GN'R deliver.

Friday's appearance by a hit-toting **Billy Idol** signifies RIR's commitment to its heritage, even if he suffers so many technical failures that he piles into *Rebel Yell* insisting: "I'm gonna do this fucking gig if it kills me". **Fall Out Boy** fare better, throwing a monster

like *Sugar, We're Goin Down* away early as they prove themselves the thinking man's Blink. A frenzied *Dance Dance* and *This Ain't A Scene, It's An Arms Race* are definitive emo-pop, and Patrick Stump is so burning with emotion during his big-ballad piano segment that the piano catches fire.

Ultimately, though, **Green Day** are the daddies. "Viva Brazil!" Billie Joe Armstrong yells as he chases a giant rabbit dancing to *Blitzkrieg Bop* from the stage, and charges into a set of stadium-riot pop (*American Idiot*, *Basket Case*), anthemic Clash sloganeering (*Know Your Enemy*) and ska shanties (*Majority*, *Holiday*). Despite dips into their emo-punk concept opuses, these are two flab-free hours: *Welcome To Paradise* is a canyon-jump of a song, *When I Come Around* a proto-Weezer groove and, even when inviting fans on stage to sing choruses they never miss a riff.

Green Day do with punk what was always meant to be done: maximise it for the masses, hammer home its subversive ideas and have a whole lotta fun in the process. Get pissed, enjoy. And that, too, is Rock In Rio encapsulated. Viva Brazil indeed.

Mark Beaumont

Lindsey Buckingham

London Palladium

Ex-Mac man going his own way.

★ In contrast to the celebratory “Where were we when we first heard-this?” carnival of his former band’s shows, Lindsey Buckingham’s solo concert is a cavalcade of beguiling pop hooks and astounding guitar-playing technique, overlaid by a compelling intensity.

Since being fired by Fleetwood Mac in 2018, Buckingham has released his finest solo album yet (last year’s *Lindsey Buckingham*), and had open-heart surgery, a cancer scare and marital troubles. But, these days rock-star-thin in skinny jeans, he’s still determined to do it his way.

Not even his conventional-looking band are what they seem. There’s no bassist until late on, when the rhythm guitarist moves over, although there has been plenty of low, atmospheric tones from the keyboard player, and the drummer rarely hits his cymbals.

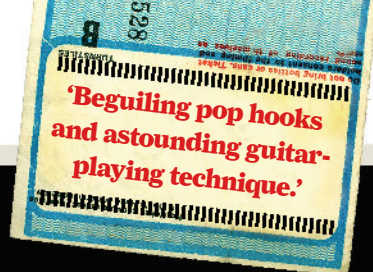
The set is mainly drawn from his seven solo albums, with five songs from his latest one. The hectic strumming, delicious finger picking, sublime melodies and passionate vocal refrains seem designed to show that his songs work even better solo than in a group. As if to prove the point, he plays *Big Love* alone. And for *Go Your Own Way* the audience is not invited for a singalong.

Buckingham gets the standing ovation he clearly craves and indeed deserves. But the following day he cancelled the rest of his UK tour due to “health concerns”. Which is unsettling news.

Hugh Fielder



Lindsey Buckingham:
sublime melodies and
passionate vocal refrains.



Thurston Moore Group

London Camden The Powerhaus

Sonic Youth guitarist burns bright with current band.

★ To close one’s eyes during the rising and extended drone that is *Venus* at the close of this remarkable performance is to enter a world of transcendent beauty. As the lights strafe and flicker to create stunning views via closed-eye hallucinations, the interaction between Thurston Moore, guitarist James Sedwards, bassist Deb Googe, drummer Jem Doulton and Jon Leidecker’s electronic embellishments weave a divine sound that banishes the ill thoughts of the Powerhaus’s overpriced bar.

The intertwining of the guitar styles on display are an utter joy as Sedwards’s classic soloing coalesces seamlessly with Moore’s alternative tunings and sonic explorations. Witness the chugging *Cantaloupe* that at once embraces a rock’n’roll approach with a questing sensibility, an aesthetic that is repeated to full effect with the intoxicating swirl of *Hashish*.

Moore’s primordial influences come to the fore with a stunning reading of the Velvet Underground’s *Temptation Inside Your Heart* that gives some idea as to what his forebears might have sounded like in 1966. But it’s the groove from the engine room of Googe and Doulton that root the songs in a firm footing and allows the six-string flights of fancy to truly hit home.

“We’re thinking of calling ourselves Easy Peasy,” Moore quips. But that’s way too much of a misnomer for music as powerful, inventive and sublime as this.

Julian Marszalek

Man

St Leonards-on-Sea The Piper

No fading yet for the Welshmen with their heart in San Francisco.

★ Not to be confused with Son Of Man – a breakaway unit led by George Jones, whose late father Micky co-founded Man in 1968 – the current incarnation stars bassist Martin Ace, who has flitted in and out of the line-up since the following year. They also now include his lad Josh on guitar. It’s a complex situation but, as their family tree and storied history suggests, nothing with this enduring Welsh band has ever been easy.

On an evening when the summer reaches its balmy last knockings, Man attract a decent-sized and enthusiastic audience who cheer a riotous yet beautifully channelled 15-minute rendition of *Spunk Rock* from 1977’s *All’s Well That Ends Well*, and by the time they sign off with the same record’s closer *Romain* The Piper’s dancefloor is rammed with idiot-dancers, limbs flailing and pints flying.

Introducing songs with wonderfully random remarks and singing in a low, defiant voice, it’s only natural that 76-year-old Martin Ace is a central presence, although James Beck steps up to steal the show. A fluid, graceful guitar player, Beck performs like a genetic heir to the much-missed Deke Leonard and Micky Jones.

How much gas remains in the tank for Man remains to be seen, but their 2022 configuration serves an epic legacy very proudly indeed.

Dave Ling

Anthrax

London Brixton Academy

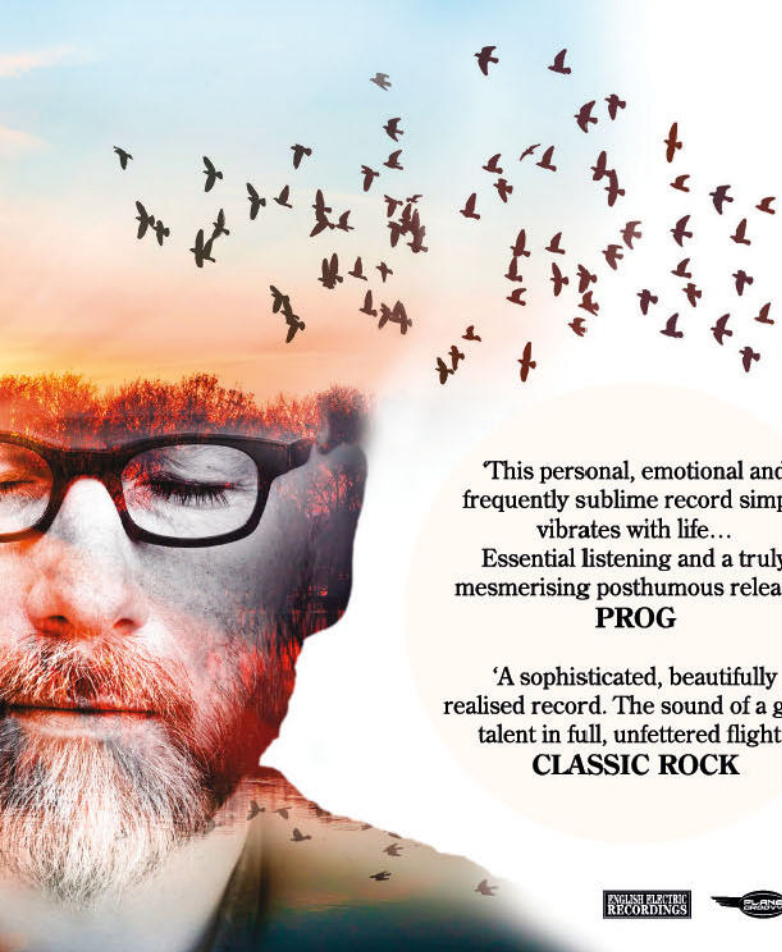
Thrash metal trailblazers’ belated 40th-birthday blowout.

★ What goes around comes around, even in the world of thrash metal. “This is our biggest show in the UK in thirty years,” Anthrax guitarist Scott Ian says proudly from the stage of the 5,000-capacity Brixton Academy, a tacit acknowledgement of the commercial and intra-band ups and downs the New York quintet have faced over the last few decades.

This 40th anniversary tour – delayed two years by the pandemic – is a ‘greatest hits’ set, skewed heavily towards the first decade of their career. They blaze through the big numbers: *Among The Living*, *I Am The Law*, *Madhouse*, the hokey but endearing *Metal Thrashing Mad*. Singer Joey Belladonna still scuttles around the stage like a chicken with its arse feathers on fire, but his voice is undimmed by the years, nailing the high notes on *Indians* and all-time great pit anthem *Caught In A Mosh*. Ian steps up to the microphone for their immortal cover of Public Enemy’s *Bring The Noise*, which unexpectedly segues into a version of Anthrax’s own proto-rap metal spoof *I’m The Man*.

It’s an exercise in nostalgia, of course, which is at odds with thrash metal’s original mission statement to be faster and nastier than everyone else. But no one here would begrudge Anthrax the opportunity to look back over everything they’ve achieved. As the three-word hook of closing song *Efilnikufesin* (*N.F.L.*) puts it: nice fucking life.

Dave Everley



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Suede

London Electric Ballroom

Triumphant set draws largely from the here and now.

★ Few words strike terror into the hearts of fans as much as: "Here's another one from the new album", not least when uttered from a band with the same vintage as Suede. And yet here they are, into their third decade, playing their ninth album *Autofiction* in its entirety.

It's a ballsy move, but one that makes perfect sense given the album's back-to-basics feel. And the pay-off is evident as the eager audience sings along lustily with songs from a record that's barely three weeks old. Belying his 55 years, whipper-thin singer Brett Anderson alternately prowls the stage, whips his mic lead and frequently stands on the monitors to exhort his constituency.

With Neil Codling stepping away from his keyboard to join Richard Oakes on guitar, the sound on *She Still Leads Me On* and *15 Again* is powerfully direct, while the rhythm section of bassist Mat Osman and drummer Simon Gilbert underpin the set with precision and power.

When the band return for a second set playing more familiar material, *We Are The Pigs* is a striding colossus, while the triple whammy of *So Young*, *Metal Mickey* and *Animal Nitrate* serves to remind of the importance of Suede's influential debut album of '93. But for all that and an encore of *Beautiful Ones*, the new material is what lingers. Proof positive that Suede are far from over.

Julian Marszalek



Brett Anderson leads Suede through old favourites and impressive new material.

Uriah Heep

London Palladium

Very 'eavy, very 'umble, very 'allowed.

★ When your band's 50th anniversary inspires videos of congratulation from Paul Stanley, Brian May, Steve Harris, Francis Rossi, Deep Purple, Alice Cooper, Scott Gorham, Judas Priest, Vanilla Fudge and Blue Öyster Cult, among many others, it's obvious that Uriah Heep's naysayers from the 70s and beyond haven't a clue what they're talking about.

Three years after the tickets went on sale and two years later than planned, Uriah Heep finally celebrate a half-century of swimming against the tide, with two sets: 50 unplugged minutes of the band at their most sentimental, and an hour and a half of the stirring bludgeon riffola that once prompted a *Rolling Stone* reporter to vow that she would commit suicide if the band became successful.

At the grand old age of 75, the king of the wah-wah and last man standing from the original group, guitarist Mick Box is still proving her wrong, and the simple formula behind his group remains phenomenally effective. Just about every song combines crushing Hammond organ with memorable hook lines, athletic lead vocals from Bernie Shaw, nimble song structures and impeccable five-part vocal harmonies. From *Between Two Worlds* to *Stealin'* and *Sunrise*, the word 'aaaaaaah!' is a cornerstone. Pay out a tenner each time it's deployed and they could single-handedly rescue the nation's economy.

Respect is due. It's about time Heep received it.

Dave Ling

The Analogues

London Palladium

Note-and-sound-perfect recreations of Beatles songs The Beatles never did live.

★ Dutch five-piece The Analogues are a tribute band, a Beatles tribute band, like no other. They don't copy The Beatles' dress sense, or have a designated John, Paul, George and Ringo. Interchanging between vocals and instruments, and augmented by string and horn sections, they faithfully replicate the albums The Beatles never played live, down to every note and vocal timbre. It's eerily immaculate. They've already done *Sgt. Pepper* and the *White Album* (extracts of which they played in the second half of the show), and tonight it's *Abbey Road*.

Of course, these albums were never created with the live experience in mind. By 1969 the likes of Cream, Led Zeppelin and Jimi Hendrix had raised the volume and temperature of the live rock experience; George Harrison's twangy little solos seemed feeble by comparison with all of that. At the Palladium, an audience mostly of a certain age were experiencing a near-perfect facsimile of something that was never intended or expected to be played live.

Still, presented thus, it was a chance to re-evaluate *Abbey Road*, curiously dominated by George Harrison's twin peaks *Something* and *Here Comes The Sun* and feeling overall with its closing song suite like an attempt to match Brian Wilson's studio creations for the Beach Boys rather than to keep pace with festival rock. An uncanny joy.

David Stubbs

Seasick Steve

Coventry HMV Empire

Hobo bluesman rambles to a different beat.

★ What a difference a drummer can make. Last time Seasick Steve toured the UK it was a one-man-and-his-guitar set-up, folksy blues with a lineage running from Blind Lemon Jefferson through to Bob Dylan. Tonight's opening number *Don't Know Why She Love Me But She Do* is a different beast entirely, drummer Dan Magnusson tap-dancing across his kit, adding shades of Allman Brothers and even a bit of ZZ Top boogie.

Perched on an ornate wooden chair like a backwoods king on his throne, Steve captivates the audience with his genteel country-boy mannerisms. The chatter between songs isn't really banter – half the time he doesn't even talk into the mic – but it crafts an informal tone that perfectly accentuates the evening. "This song is about being young and dumb," Steve says. "Someone's gotta do it... I sure did."

Although undoubtedly rooted in the blues, the set plays out like Seasick Steve's personal Great American Songbook. There's the funky guitar licks of *Trainwreck*, the Bobbie Gentry-like whimsical strut of *Hobo Low*, and set closer *Thunderbird* builds to a wallop crescendo that makes John Bonham's performance on *When The Levee Breaks* seem effete. Through it all, Steve imbues every song with his own character, transforming them into dust-speckled parables with a deviously infectious beat. As Steve himself puts it: "You're never too old to boogie."

Rich Hobson

BACK TO LIVE

Deep Purple / Blue Öyster Cult

London O2 Arena

**Veterans deliver a hit-packed,
hard rock master class.**

★ With only Buck Dharma and Eric Bloom remaining from their classic line-up, New York's slightly less direct answer to Black Sabbath can still deliver a machismo-sweetening vocal harmony when roused. Ultimately garnering an enthusiastic response for a short 'n' sweet set packed with absolute monsters: *Godzilla*, *Hot Rails To Hell*, *Cities On Flame With Rock 'N' Roll*. (Don't Fear) *The Reaper* could have done with more cowbell, but hey, when push comes to shove, what couldn't?

Opening with *Highway Star*, Ian Gillan doesn't make life easy for himself. There's nowhere for a vocalist to hide as the iconic *Machine Head* powerhouse pinwheels from timber-shivering climax to pounding crescendo, but Gillan rises to the occasion and only improves, not least on a scintillating *When A Blind Man Cries*. Roger Glover and Ian Paice masterfully syncopate an Olympic-standard *Lazy*, although Don Airey's lengthy keyboard solo could do without donning metaphorical red nose and big shoes for *Maybe It's Because I'm A Londoner*. Yet tonight truly belongs to Simon McBride. Steve Morse's replacement (and perhaps surprisingly only the fourth guitarist in Purps history) is just astounding. That said, he doesn't storm off, or throw his guitar at anybody, or mandolin a madrigal in tights, but you can't have everything.

Ian Fortnam



Highway Stars: Glover, Gillan and McBride.

Roxy Music

Manchester AO Arena

Swansong or not, it's a triumphant reunion.

★ As Roxy Music celebrate the 50th anniversary of their game-changing debut album, there's added piquancy to the proposal of *If There Is Something that the grass was greener 'when you were young'*. Roxy were making records for only 11 of those 50 years, with a four-year gap midway through that period, but their legacy remains proud and boundless. That said, the arena audience seems split between those who want the pioneering art rock of the band's breakthrough and those coveting the smooth sophistication of the *Avalon* era. Roxy do all they can to please everybody, with the first hour reminding us how groundbreaking their early sound collages were – *In Every Dream Home A Heartache* explodes into a shredding Phil Manzanera guitar solo – and the second sauntering through the arch, airy hits, dancing away the heartache.

Now aged 77, Bryan Ferry's vocal range is fading, but that somehow adds to the drama of Roxy's world-building. A 13-piece band ensures the fantasies – of romance, of sci-fi, of pop music as an aesthetic Camelot – don't falter, and the films and backdrops (drive-ins, flamingoes, millions of Warhol Marilyns) are dazzling. From the staccato stabs of *Virginia Plain* to the louche *Love Is The Drug* to a euphoric *Editions Of You*, Roxy's reunion and possible swansong is a triumph, leaving us hoping that, somehow, there'll be more than this.

Chris Roberts

Agent Orange

New York Saint Vitus

**Californian surf punks ignore the tides
of time.**

★ CBGB might now be a designer menswear boutique, but New York hasn't forgotten its punk lineage, and Saint Vitus is now the new Mecca for the underground. Agent Orange set the stage for the likes of The Offspring and Green Day with their SoCal-surf-rock-meets-first-wave-punk synthesis. This isn't megadome pop-punk, however; opener *A Cry For Help In A World Gone Mad* sees an unending cycle of bodies clattering and frantic stage invasions/dives.

In turn, this spurs Agent Orange to go harder on their hardcore inclinations, stepping up the pace on songs such as *It's In Your Head*, *Tearing Me Apart* and *No Such Thing*, so the melodic elements become less apparent when stacked against the sheer hyperactivity of their sound. Some things just can't be lost, however. Each song has massive hooks, the bark-alongs of *Breakdown*, *Bloodstains* and *Everything Turns Grey* almost fulfilling their arena-sized anthemic potential.

Much as frontman Mike Palm promises "crusty punk classics", the true secret weapon is Agent Orange's deployment of buzzing surf-rock, with *The Last Goodbye* and a groove-heavy cover of Dead Kennedy's *Police Truck* sounding like Dick Dale playing with the Ramones. Covers of surf-rock classics *Misirlou* and *Pipeline* bring an undeniable sense of character that even today leaves Agent Orange as one of punk's most distinctive – albeit criminally overlooked – groups.

Rich Hobson

Billy Idol / Killing Joke / Toyah

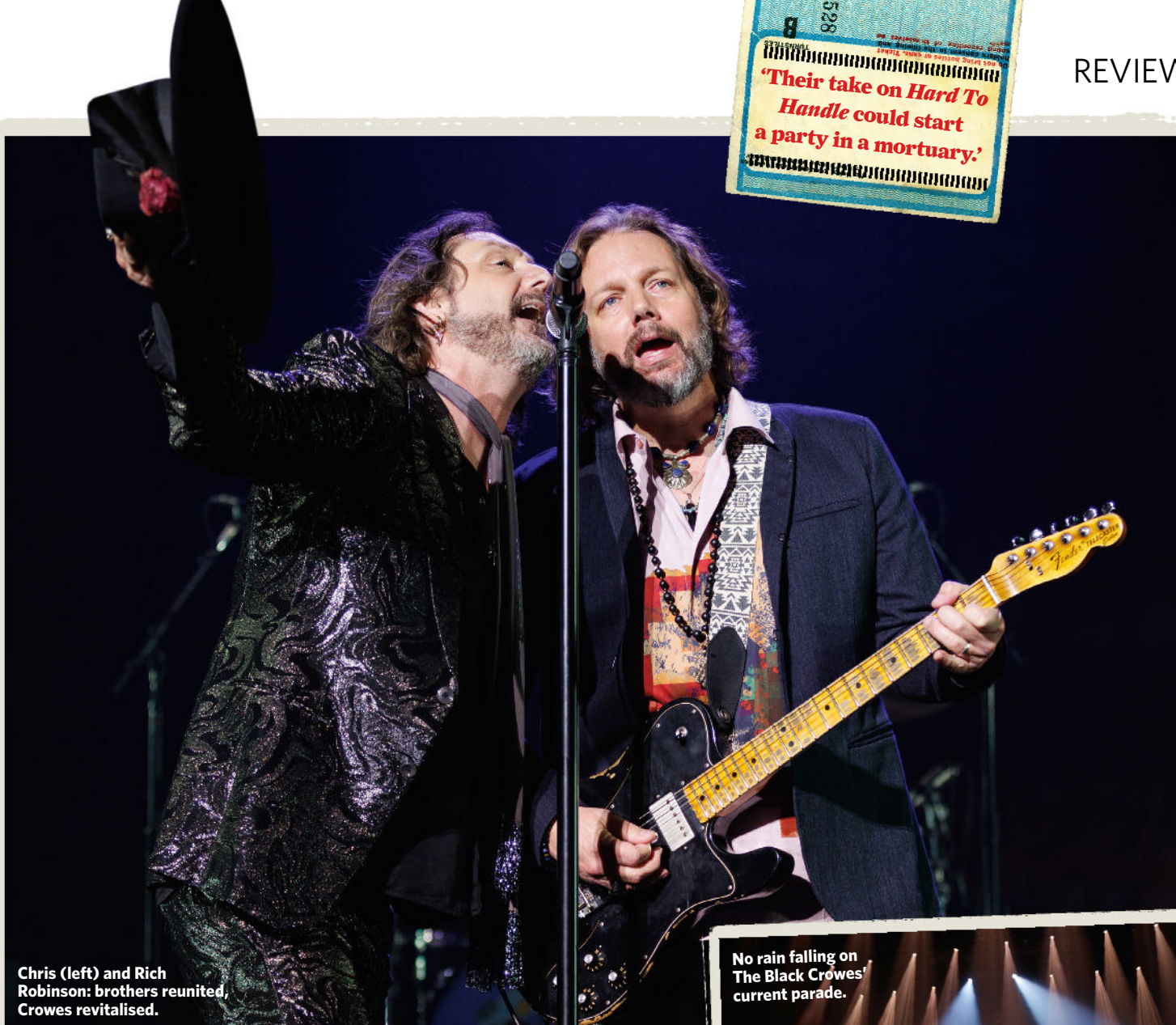
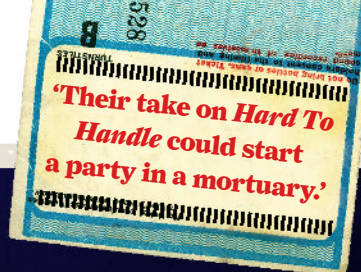
Manchester AO Arena

Former punk Billy just about pulls it off.

★ Not everything ran smoothly prior to this covid-postponed tour, with bizarrely incongruous support act Television pulling out at the eleventh hour. To compensate, replacements Killing Joke step in and, within five minutes, frontman Jaz Coleman announces to the half-empty aircraft hangar: "We are on the verge of World War Three!" It's a different approach to opener Toyah's effervescent spirits as she bounces around turning suburbia upside down, exuding more positivity than a Butlin's Redcoat. Although the Joke – pointing out they're 43 years old as a band – do then focus on grinding out bloody-minded, impactful assaults like *Wardance*, *Requiem* and *Eighties*.

Billy Idol knows his role is both cartoon punk and MTV rock god, and straddles the divide with likeable dumb charm. It's a challenge to stretch the set from opener *Dancing With Myself* to closer *Rebel Yell* (which he describes as "Idol classics"), but he manages it with multiple shirt/jacket changes, extended takes on *Eyes Without A Face* and *Flesh For Fantasy*, solid new material from *The Cage* EP, and a spirited spurt of Generation X's *100 Punks*. Less enjoyable are the recurring widdly-wank guitar solos from Steve Stevens, which seem to last 100 years. Billy, having ranted about the pandemic and praised "Manchester, England!" several times, peppily pulls it together with a *White Wedding* encore, and seems fit to start again.

Chris Roberts



Chris (left) and Rich Robinson: brothers reunited, Crowes revitalised.

The Black Crowes

London Brixton Academy

The Robinson Brothers party like it's 1989 on pandemic-delayed reunion tour.

★ "Monday night is Saturday night for the fucking cool people," Chris Robinson says a couple of songs into The Black Crowes' set. Given that he's wearing a shiny black suit and a wide-brimmed hat and twirling a colourful umbrella, like the wayward offspring of Mary Poppins and The Child Catcher from *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, it's hard to take him entirely seriously.

In fairness, Robinson could have strode on stage wearing just a pair of arseless chaps and light-up deeley boppers and the cheer that greets the singer and his band would have been just as loud. This is the penultimate date of the Crowes' first UK tour since their reunion in 2019, even if the split that preceded it – the product of filial disharmony between Chris and guitarist brother Rich – officially lasted just four years.

In the past, Black Crowes gigs could be utterly transcendent or an exercise in self-indulgent torture, with little in the way of middle ground. Tonight they're playing to the gallery, playing their 1989 debut album *Shake Your Monkey Maker* in full followed by a grab-bag of tunes from their illustrious past. It's a canny move. It's still their biggest album, with all the commercial pull that entails. It's also a surefire way of signalling to fans that this will be The Black Crowes at

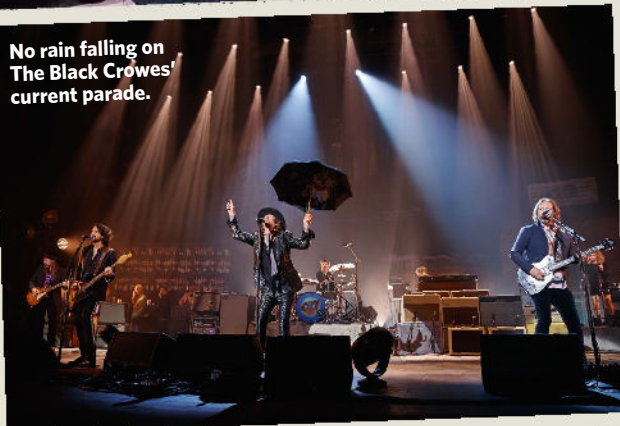
their rock'n'roll best, rather than The Black Crowes choogling themselves to death.

The band's entrance on stage proves as much. There are no huge video screens or banks of lasers to fanfare their arrival. Instead they gather at the real-life bar that's been constructed stage right and begin toasting each other, before ambling over to their instruments. And then it's straight into the elastic riff that introduces album opener *Twice As Hard*, the elder Robinson practically pirouetting to his mic stand, umbrella a-twirling.

As promised, we get the album in full, in its original order tonight. This is great news for the first 30 minutes. *Twice As Hard* is followed by the equally bulletproof *Jealous Again*, *Seeing Things* and *She Talks To Angels*, epic and otherworldly, and their take on Otis Redding's *Hard To Handle* could start a party in a mortuary. But *Shake Your Money Maker* is a long way from being the Crowes' best album, as proven by tail-enders *Struttin' Blues* and *Stare It Cold*, two songs that even the Robinsons' immediate family would struggle to recognise.

Still, the issue of whether the detente between the brothers will hold is answered tonight. The pair seem

No rain falling on The Black Crowes' current parade.

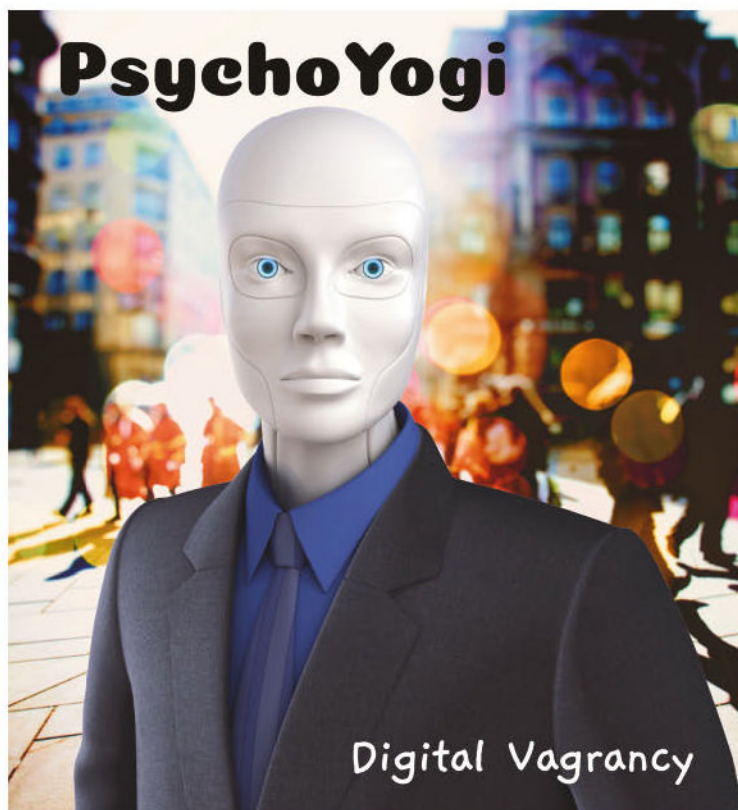


to be genuinely enjoying bouncing off of each other. But with Chris and Rich being the sole remaining members from their late-80s-thru-mid-90s heyday, questions have inevitably been asked as to the authenticity of this iteration of The Black Crowes.

The final third of the set sees the shackles come off. In time honoured Crowes fashion, they've been mixing it up at previous shows. Tonight we get *No Speak No Slave*, an exultant *Wiser Time* and an ever-electric *Sting Me*, but sadly no *My Morning Song*. They throw in a cover of The Temptations hit *Papa Was A Rolling Stone* and a euphoric concluding blast of the old spiritual *God's Got It*, by which time the top hat and gaudy umbrella are a distant memory.

Hopefully the revitalised Robinsons will be back soon to tour godlike second album *The Southern Harmony And Musical Companion*, or maybe even serve up some new music at some point. Of course, there's every chance they'll have split up and reunited at least twice by then.

Dave Everley



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CLASSIC
Rock



Kiss



Continued from page 54

lost on the men who helped invent the look in the first place.

"Because of the success of those bands, and a lot of others who were very comfortable doing what they were doing, we succumbed to it," says Simmons. "I remember being at an airport shopping mall in Minneapolis. I walked past this women's dress store, and I saw this *thing* and I stopped. I don't what it was – it was red and it was shiny and had all this little pieces that moved. I went: 'I gotta buy that.'

"And I put this thing on, and of course it ripped on the sides. So I had the seamstress add some fabric. I just thought I looked like peaches and cream. It was the most embarrassing cross-dressing thing you could ever imagine. I looked like a football player in a tutu."

While Kiss couldn't match their younger rivals sartorially, musically the playing field was at least more level. Two consecutive platinum albums had given the band a renewed confidence by the time they entered the studio to record their fourteenth studio album. Or at least for Paul Stanley it had. Gene Simmons, on the other hand, was altogether less engaged with the matter at hand.

"Gene can say whatever he wants about being disenchanted with the eighties," says Stanley. "But he was the problem. Or part of the problem. When he was out doing other projects, or trying to become a TV star, or working with other bands – and he would have been better off sleeping than working with some of the calibre of bands he worked with – it compromised everything he did."

After two albums that had ostensibly been produced by Stanley (although the production credits read Stanley-Simmons), the singer decided it was time to bring in an outside producer. The man chosen was Ron Nevison, who had overseen Ozzy Osbourne's slick *The Ultimate Sin* (which reached No.6 in the *Billboard* charts in 1986, his highest solo chart placing until 1995's *Ozzmosis*), and Heart's career-saving multi-platinum self-titled album of 1985 and the equally successful follow-up, *Bad Animals*, in 1987. Nevison was the go-to guy for 80s rock with a hi-vis pop sheen.

"Paul was really excited by Ron Nevison," says Bruce Kulick. "He befriended him, they were hanging out. Paul had nine songs ready to go for the album. Gene was not in bed with Nevison at all, vibes-wise, because I think he thought he might be too pop."

Any objections Simmons might have had were undermined by the fact that had effectively let Stanley sit in the driving seat. "He was either in the studio tired or bringing in material that was sub-par at that point," says Stanley. "It was very gradual, but certainly during *Crazy Nights* it was

becoming clear that I was not happy pulling all the weight. I said: 'This doesn't work for me. I either have a partner or I don't. I'm not looking for accolades, I'm looking for input.'"

Crazy Nights was treated snuffily upon its release in September 1987, but today its shamelessly commercial approach has aged incredibly well. The gang vocals of MTV staple *Crazy Crazy Nights* (which reached No.4 in the UK singles chart, marking their first British Top 10 hit) and skyscraping AOR synths of *Turn On The Night* approach pop-rock perfection, while *Reason To Live* is the greatest ballad Foreigner never wrote (although given the fact it sounded suspiciously similar to *I Want To Know What Love Is*, Mick Jones could have justifiably claimed to have written the song anyway).

Today, Stanley looks back on the album with mixed feelings: proud of some of the music, but undeniably marked at the circumstances in which it was made.

"It may be admirable to stay in a leaky ship and keep bailing water, but it doesn't get the same result," says Stanley. "I didn't do that by choice. And what was lacking was my team-mate's commitment. The work he was bringing in was sub-par, but the bottom line is that he was absent."

"Did it feel like I was flying the Kiss flag alone at that point?" Stanley asks. "Oh, totally. That's no secret. It was in my hands."

"We faltered, and we certainly got lost. But out of those lost periods came some really good stuff."

Paul Stanley

Things weren't much better with the follow-up, 1989's *Hot In The Shade*. Although Simmons had taken Stanley's criticisms on board, the recording of the album was still less than smooth – not helped by the fact that the two of them had decided to co-produce it.

"I think they wanted to return to straight-ahead rock'n'roll," says Bruce Kulick. "So the record started off as demos, which we then started overdubbing. I understood why, but I didn't like that whole approach."

"We were back with Gene and Paul producing, which means the two of them are gonna compromise – 'I like that song of yours, but I don't like that one'; 'Well, if you let me use mine...' That was one of the weaknesses of having the two of them producing."

"*Hot In The Shade* was very fragmented, very piecemeal," Stanley acknowledges. "We were like a ship without a captain."

So much so that he decided to embark on a solo tour at the end of 1989.

After the pop-rock glories of *Crazy Nights*, *Hot In The Shade* (note the tongue-in-cheek acronym its initials form) sounded like a step backwards. The likes of *Prisoner Of Love* and Desmond Child/Holly Knight co-write *Hide Your Heart* were proficient, by-numbers arena rock. Fortunately, the glorious power-ballad *Forever* provided Kiss with their biggest US hit in years. Interestingly, it had Bruce Kulick playing bass rather than Simmons.

But for all the ongoing strains within the group, there was a light at the end of the tunnel.

"When we went on tour, we rallied," says Stanley. "We began to embrace our history. We would literally hit every period of the band, and we did it proudly."

Kiss left the 80s in much better shape than they entered it. They had a stable line-up, and a sales graph that was headed upwards rather than downwards. There was just one dark cloud on the horizon: in 1990, Eric Carr would be diagnosed with a cancerous tumour in his heart. Sadly, the drummer died of complications from the disease on November 24, 1991. Kiss's next album (their sixteenth), 1992's Bob Ezrin-produced *Revenge*, would be dedicated to the fallen drummer.

"In hindsight, we knew we needed a catalyst, somebody to focus us," Stanley says of that record. "And Bob Ezrin seemed like the right choice. Working with Bob was a pleasure, and he had the discipline that we enjoyed. And we were pleased with it. I didn't love everything on it, but that's what you give up when you have a producer."

Ezrin certainly helped pull Kiss together for an unexpectedly cohesive album. He also helped to channel in a positive way the natural competitiveness between Simmons and Stanley.

"Are they in competition?" says Kulick. "In many, many ways, throughout their entire career."

But as much as it causes some problems, it's actually created one of the biggest bands in the world. It's healthy competition."

It was arguably this competition that kept Kiss together when other, less stubborn bands would long-since have packed away the leather trousers and silk shirts and decided to go their separate ways.

Looking back on Kiss's most tumultuous decade, Simmons admits culpability for at least some of the difficulties they went through.

"The songs I wrote in the eighties were nowhere near what they should have been," he says. "I got caught up with it. I was seduced by the times."

Stanley draws an analogy with an Olympic athlete: "You go in there to best yourself. And sometimes you don't have the capacity. Every time we went in the studio, we went in with the idea of making a great album. But every time we went in the studio we were trying to make a great album under whatever the circumstances were. And whoever was in the band and whatever the politics were."

"Let's be honest, at different times, everybody has been MIA in this band. But without patting myself on the back, I certainly showed up every day and gave it my best."

Stanley says he hasn't listened to Kiss's 80s albums in their entirety for a long time. But he sees the value of them – and everything they went through to make them.

"They were all part of getting us back to where we are now," he says. "We faltered, and we certainly got lost. But out of those lost periods came some really good stuff. There are some real gems in there." ●

Creatures Of The Night (reviewed on page 80) is available now via *U+Me*.



The Soundtrack Of My Life

The White Buffalo, aka **Jake Smith**, on the records, artists and gigs that are of lasting significance to him.

Interview: Niall Doherty



“Paul McCartney is an amazing singer and can also hit you with this crazy attitude.”

The White Buffalo, aka American singer-songwriter Jake Smith, has made seven albums that blend grizzled Americana and feisty folk-rock, but for his conceptual eighth, *Year Of The Dark Horse*, he wanted to expand his sound. “The songs are still there, but it’s sonically elevated,” he says. “Not that the whole country thing disturbs me, but I’ve never been into those boxes, and didn’t really think I fit in anyway.”

As you’ll see from his choices here, his influences range far and wide, whether he’s sticking on some ELO to kick-start his day, or enjoying a spate of country classics while playing darts in his garage.

THE FIRST MUSIC I REMEMBER HEARING

My first memory of listening to music was up in Oregon. I was born in Oregon and raised in Southern California, but we’d go up to my poppa’s house, my grandfather, and we’d listen to Roger Miller records, like *Dang Me* and *Chug-A-Lug*. I think of sitting on my grandfather’s lap and eating these orange candy things he had in the jar next to his La-Z-Boy. An early, beautiful memory.

THE FIRST SONG I PERFORMED LIVE

I was eighteen and I entered a contest. I sang a Dwight Yoakam song called *Ain’t That Lonely Yet*. It was at this local country bar in Orange County and they fucked up the key – it was three or four keys too high. It totally screwed me up.

THE GUITAR HERO

My favourite guitar players are Mark Knopfler and David Gilmour. I don’t really like flash, just to be able to emote and have melodies that are memorable. Both these guys aren’t flashy and you know it’s them. That’s got to be the ultimate goal, a signature sound where nobody sounds like you.

THE SINGER

There’s two kinds of singers: talented people who can hit extreme notes and can hit you with acrobatics, then there’s attitude people. But there’s a few people that are both. People like Paul McCartney, who’s an amazing singer and can also hit you with this crazy attitude, Ray Charles, Joe Cocker, people that can emote. I like a little grit, a little gravel and a little range.

THE SONGWRITER

Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Elliott Smith are my favourites, people that can really use words and melody to hit you in the heart. Those people are the gift that keeps giving, where you think the song is about this and then you’re: “Oh, maybe it’s about that.”

THE GREATEST ALBUM OF ALL TIME

My favourite record is the Wilco album *Sky Blue Sky*. I put it on every time I’m tripping on mushrooms. It’s this sonic journey. I love how Jeff Tweedy twists words

and gives emotion and life to inanimate things, he’s a master of that. Everyone says *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* is their opus but I think *Sky Blue Sky* is way better. Some of the guitar solos on this thing are mind-blowing.

THE BEST LIVE ALBUM

I love the Waylon Jennings live album *Waylon Live*. You can hear the cocaine and whisky, it emanates out of this record.

THE BEST RECORD I MADE

I think it’s the new one, *Year Of The Dark Horse*, sonically and the conceptual idea about things. It goes through dark moments but it’s not as dark as some of the other stuff I’ve done.

THE WORST RECORD I MADE

Hogtied Revisited [2008] is a re-do of my very first album, *Hogtied Like A Rodeo*. It was my first time in a studio, and I would leave and other musicians would come in and I wasn’t as involved. I was still green and I felt like it just got away from me. So I re-recorded it.

MY GUILTY PLEASURE

The country music that I grew up on with my family. I probably saw fifty concerts with my brother and sister by the time I was thirteen. I have a Spotify playlist with country from the mid-eighties to mid-nineties that starts with the song *Bop* by Dan Seals, which is the more extreme cheese. I listen to it when I’m playing darts in the garage. It was the end of an era of country where it was still country and wasn’t this formulaic bullshit that you get today.

THE BEST COVER VERSION

The Joe Cocker versions of *The Letter* by The Box Tops and The Beatles’ *With A Little Help From My Friends* and *She Came In Through The Bathroom Window* are untouchable.

THE MOST UNDERRATED BAND EVER

Contemporary-wise, there’s a band called Deer Tick who I think are underrated. They’re great songwriters.

MY PARTY SONG

I’ll put on ELO all day long. During the pandemic, I rediscovered Electric Light Orchestra. You can’t not feel good listening to that shit. It’s so unique, with Jeff Lynne’s production and his singing.

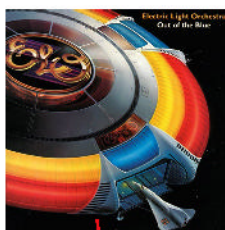
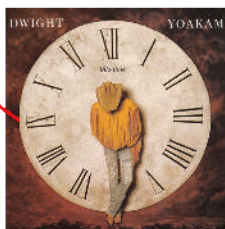
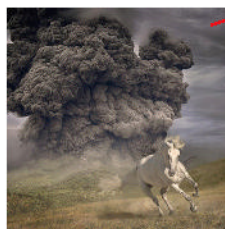
THE SONG THAT MAKES ME CRY

There’s this deep cut called *Quits* by Danny O’Keefe. I don’t know much about him but this song is about divorce and it’s heart-wrenching.

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

I don’t like listening to my own music, especially when other people are present. But maybe when I’m dead I can play one of my own. So I’d go with the last song on *Year Of The Dark Horse*, called *Life Goes On*. The last verse is about how you die but there’s still birds and dogs and trees and life goes on for everybody else. 🐉

Year Of The Dark Horse is out now via Snakefarm.





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